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AT ODDS;

A Novel.

BY THE BARONESS TAUTPHOEUS,

AUTHOR OF 'THE INITIALS,' 'QUITS,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY,

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AT ODDS.

INTRODUCTION.

At the commencement of my residence in Bavaria, few things surprised me more than the vivid recollection of the war at the beginning of this century possessed by all old, and many scarcely elderly people. Names that for me belonged to history were mentioned familiarly, and many a hearty laugh indulged in, at the expense of very celebrated personages.

My mother-in-law was inexhaustible in her stories of the Teutonic Order—of the French when quartered in her neighbourhood, where they made themselves at home in the old castle at Dinkelsbühl, in which she then resided—of her husband driving off at midnight with papers of

importance—of the raising of floors and removal of ceilings for the purpose of concealing plate, &c. —but I cannot say that even her best remembered squabbles with Caulaincourt about the loan of forks and spoons for his dinner parties, and his wonderfully polite assurances that nothing lent by her should ever find a place in his or any of his followers' portmanteaus, interested me much, until a friend of her youth came to spend the winter with us in the country, where the reminiscences ceased to be mere anecdotes, and lengthened into wide-branching stories that at length attracted my attention and excited my interest so effectually, that I felt as if I too had known the persons, and seen the places, so often and graphically described.

A more intelligent and amusingly talkative person than this friend of my mother-in-law, I have seldom met—a German Scheherezade, who never allowed day or lamp light to interrupt her discourse until she had completed her story; and if the motives of the actions recorded by her strongly resembled, or were precisely the same as those which actuate the world around us now, the

violent political convulsions and desperate military struggles of those times exercised not unfrequently their influence on families and even individuals in a manner that threw a gleam of romance on many a commonplace event, or gave rise to connexions or estrangements that would be more than improbabilities in the present day.

It was when walking through the old town of Ulm for the first time a few years since, that I became fully aware of the deep impression made on me by these recitals. I actually felt as if I had been there before, and were well acquainted with the narrow streets and ancient houses—as if I had stood before the cathedral half a century ago—had walked on the ramparts—watched the Austrian soldiers working at the entrenchments that were to spare them a capitulation to Napoleon; and at length I could almost imagine I saw Marshal Mack and his brilliant staff galloping past, while from one of the windows of a certain corner house, well known from description, I could fancy the face of my cheerful old friend as it may have appeared at that time, with its profusion of auburn curls, bright brown eyes, well-

formed mouth, and teeth that were faultless even at seventy years of age! I saw her lean out of the window to look after the young men with whom she was to dance in the evening; and where from that same window not long afterwards she watched with not a little anxiety the entrance of the French into the town! The reputation of the latter at that time was not good, and no sooner had her father ascertained that he was to be favoured with the company of some officers, than she and her sister were ordered to retreat to the cellar, where their beds were made, and they were provided with lamps and provisions by their maid, who constantly recommended patience, and daily assured them that the French officers had awful whiskers and beards! Either a weariness of such imprisonment, curiosity, or (as my friend assured me with heightened colour even after the lapse of half a century) a desire to move about and make herself useful, induced her one day, when she knew her father, and supposed the strangers to be absent, to assist in carrying bread from the cellar to the kitchen. Scarcely, however, had she appeared above ground, than,

encountering a bearded face with a pair of coal-black eyes intensely expressive of amazement and amusement, she dropped her loaves, and retreated precipitately to her prison. This officer, it seems, expostulated effectually with her father on his want of confidence in French '*honneur*,' and so forth, for she and her sister were released that evening, and not only restored to the light of day, but their company required (not requested) to a ball given by the officers who remained in Ulm under the command of General Labassée, where they danced in the same public room and to the same music as with the Austrians but a short time previously;—that many of the ladies were unable to speak French, and scarcely any of the gentlemen a word of German, in no way interfered with the general hilarity.

I should not have mentioned this lady nor my late mother-in-law, had it not been from a wish to prove to my readers that if I write of a period that now belongs to history, my information (of how some—I trust not altogether uninteresting—personages lived and loved at the commencement of this century) has at least been obtained from

contemporaries whose pleasantest recollections were of those times, notwithstanding the anxieties, losses, and perils to which they were then so continually exposed.

While assuring my readers that in the following pages no poetical liberties have been taken with history, I avail myself of the opportunity of adding in the words of Montaigne, '*Je n'enseigne pas, je raconte.*'

CHAPTER I.

THE HOUSE OF THE WALDERINGS.

At the end of the long Bavarian plain that extends south-eastward from Munich towards the frontier of Austria there is a very extensive and beautiful lake called Chiemsee, and in its neighbourhood, for miles around, a number of others of smaller, and even very small, dimensions, that more than probably some centuries ago formed with it one vast sheet of water. These unknown, unnoticed, and sometimes nameless lakes are frequently bounded by gently-rising slopes or hills, many have wooded promontories stretching far into the water, but almost all are more or less disfigured and contracted by the flags, bulrushes, and other marsh plants that grow along the margin of the water in wild luxuriance.

At the commencement of this century the family of Waldering were in possession of a thick-walled, small-windowed, high-roofed castle on an island in one of these lakes. The proper deno-

mination of the building would have been 'house,' had not the weatherbeaten walls of bound-masonry, descending into the water, and a drawbridge inspired respect, and made it, though towerless, deserving of the name of castle. And, in fact, Westenried, or the West Marsh, had been a fortress, and considered nearly impregnable in its time, that is, before the discovery of gunpowder; for, were the drawbridge raised, there was no communication with the main land, the only means of approach being a long lightly-constructed causeway, if one may so call the planks laid on piles driven into the marsh, and easily removed in case of need, while the water beneath the drawbridge and surrounding the island was of very considerable depth.

The castle formed three sides of a quadrangle, open towards the island, which had been converted into a garden and orchard. That the offices occupied one side of the court, and that the stable was opposite the hall-door, seemed a matter of course to all its possessors,—at least, no effort had ever been made to place them elsewhere, and, in fact, they corresponded well with the more nseful than ornamental garden and orchard, in the former of which but a small portion of ground had been reserved for flowers, and the latter was a mere meadow where apple, plum, and pear

trees had grown to a good old age, without any particular care having been devoted to their cultivation.

The pedigree of the Walderings, in the approved form of a tree, was hung up framed and glazed in the flagged corridor leading into the chief apartments; and if it did not, like that of a well-known Hungarian nobleman, commence with Adam reclining gracefully in a shady part of the Garden of Eden, the warrior from whose broad chest the wide-spreading family tree seemed to rise might be supposed a near relative of Hermann the Cherusker—at least, if one might judge by the primitive shape of his weapons and the savage nudity of his person. There were family pictures, too, serving effectually to conceal the unpapered walls of the corridor and larger rooms: many with gilt backgrounds, brilliant colouring, and the Chinese disdain of perspective that proved almost beyond a doubt their antiquity. Had a catalogue of the numerous portraits been made, the words 'painter unknown' would have been of more than usual occurrence; but then in the corner of each picture the name and rank of the original, with his or her coat of arms, gave them a value in the opinion of most of the Walderings far surpassing the name of an artist, even had the man been Albert Dürer himself.

The second floor of the castle contained a tolerably large suite of apartments, usually reserved for the widow of the last possessor,—a sort of jointure lodging, seldom, however, used by them, for Westenried was considered a very dull place,—so dull that even the rest of the building was only occasionally visited by the Count in possession when he came to shoot or fish or look over accounts with his steward; but the latter, a pensioned officer and personal friend of the family, resided there constantly in a few rooms over the arched way that led from the drawbridge into the court.

Mr. Pallersberg might have had what he would himself have called better quarters, had he been disposed to occupy them; but both he and his wife considered it particularly desirable to have a view of the high road that had been made along the margin of the lake, and windows whence they could watch the progress of loaded waggons in summer and sledges in winter, packed alike with salt, for the conveyance of which the road had been made. The village and its church were also visible at no great distance, and the inn where the waggoners passed the night so favourably situated that the well-known figures of the priest, the schoolmaster, and the woodranger could be recognised as they sat under the trees

before the house in summer, or made their presence evident in winter by the illumination of the window of the small room reserved for them or any chance traveller of distinction.

The architecture of this inn denoted the vicinity of the highlands. The low shingle roof stretched far over the small square windows; the wooden balcony, bronzed by age, extended the whole length of the gable; and above it a fresco painting represented St. Florian in the act of pouring a bucket of water on a house which, by a stretch of the imagination, might be supposed a miniature picture of the inn itself, with red and sulphur-coloured flames issuing from every window, while beneath it, in the form of a scroll, the usual words, 'Oh, holy Saint Florian, save my house—burn others down!' in all its unchristian selfishness, was considered a preservative against the danger of conflagration.

Late one afternoon, at the close of the year 1800, several persons holding official situations in the nearest town and all the peasants of the neighbourhood were assembled at the inn; the latter in groups before the door, talking anxiously and eagerly of the battle of Hohenlinden, where Count Waldering (from whose funeral they had just returned) had lost his life a few days previously.

Some village politicians had just begun to discuss the possibility of the French army crossing the river Inn, and passing through their part of the country, when their attention was attracted by the appearance of a Bavarian officer, who rode quickly up to them, and was instantly recognised as the nephew of the late, and eldest son of the present, possessor of Westenried. The hostler, who, at first supposing him a stranger, had rushed out to take charge of the horse, and even, from force of habit, laid his hand on the bridle, no sooner looked up to the rider's face than he drew back and raised his cap, while the peasants, following his example, fixed at the same time their eyes on the young man with looks of intense inquiry.

'Is Mr. Pallersberg here?' he asked quickly.

'He is within,' answered the hostler, 'and just now thanking the gentlemen for their attendance at the funeral.'

'Tell him I wish to speak to him.'

The peasants crowded round the officer, and, though no one singly ventured to address him, a confused murmur of questions reached his ears. 'The French likely to cross the Inn?—Road lie this way?—Danger for us?'

'I hope not—I trust not,' replied the young man, biting his lip. 'Some Wurtembergers and

Austrians may march through the village to-morrow perhaps.'

These words produced a very remarkable consternation, when it is taken into consideration that the arrival of friends, not foes, had been announced; but though Westenried had hitherto escaped the visitation of marching armies, the inhabitants had suffered enough from war contributions, and heard enough of the misery caused elsewhere, not to feel easily and seriously alarmed.

Through an open window the ill news reached the peasants within the house, and so great were the panic and eagerness to leave the inn, that Mr. Pallersberg found his progress to the door greatly impeded, notwithstanding the respectful efforts of the gesticulating villagers to make way for him.

Every trace of colour had fled from his ruddy, weatherbeaten face, making the hard brown lines that furrowed it unusually perceptible; his lips were parted, his eyes distended, and long before he reached the door he seemed vainly to gasp for breath and utterance.

'Your son is safe, Mr. Pallersberg,' said the officer, in answer to the mute inquiry; 'not even wounded in this unfortunate affair. You will see him to-morrow on his way into Austria. As far as

I have been able to ascertain,' he added, 'we alone in this neighbourhood are mourners.'

Mr. Pallersberg drew a long breath, and, laying his hand on the mane of the jaded horse, that with outstretched neck had begun a slow walk towards the castle, he observed, 'Your uncle died, as he always hoped he would, Count Sigmund, a soldier's death on a field of battle, and I trust he fell without knowing that his life was a useless sacrifice.'

'You must apply to your son for particulars, Pallersberg, for our Bavarian chasseurs were in front, and I was among the first who got into action; the Austrian cavalry must have been engaged much later, as they were in the rear.'

'And in such a place,' murmured Pallersberg; 'on a road—in a wood!'

'You don't imagine we had a choice?' said Sigmund. 'Moreau was supposed to be retreating, and never was an army taken more by surprise than ours when we encountered the French. The most desperate efforts were made to get into the open field, but all in vain; the advance of artillery and cavalry served no other purpose than to block up the road and make matters worse; the sudden attack, the darkness of the wood, the snowstorm, all combined to put the troops into constantly increasing disorder. The Austrian cavalry were,

I hear, greatly cut up, especially my uncle's regiment, and it is said the Archduke himself has been wounded.'

'And what has become of your aunt's nephew, the young Irishman who was here with your uncle during the truce, and left us to enter the army under his auspices?'

'Killed, most probably,' answered Sigmund, carelessly; 'they say he was a reckless sort of fellow, always putting himself into danger, even when it was not necessary. The loss is not great, however, as there are half-a-dozen brothers of his still in Ireland, though I doubt any of them wishing to enter the Austrian service now that my uncle's death has deprived them of such powerful interest.'

'I fear,' observed Major Pallersberg, 'I fear this will be a great additional grief to your aunt.'

'No doubt, but it will prevent her from bringing any more of her English and Irish relations to us. My uncle travelled to Vienna last year in the depth of winter to get this O'More appointed to his regiment, and felt greater interest for him than for any of his own family.'

'Because he had it in his power to be useful to him,' replied Mr. Pallersberg; 'and, after all, the young man belonged to the family, being nephew

by marriage to your uncle, and consequently first cousin to his only child.'

'Hilda's cousins are not my cousins as yet,' said Sigmund; and then, after a pause, he asked when his father and brother had arrived at Westenried.

'Yesterday evening.'

'With the—the—?'

'With the corpse of your uncle, which was frozen as hard as marble.'

'Well, well,' said Sigmund, 'regrets are useless; his fate may be mine to-morrow or the day after, and with less chance of being buried with my forefathers. War blunts the feelings, as, perhaps, you know from experience, Mr. Pallersberg.'

'It may be so,' he answered gravely, 'with respect to misfortunes on a great scale, but not for the loss of personal friends.'

'My uncle's death will not affect you personally, Pallersberg, as I take it for granted you will remain at Westenried, but the loss to your son is, I fear, irreparable; my uncle was a powerful friend for him, both as his commanding officer and in consequence of his influence at head-quarters.'

'I did not mean that, Count Sigmund——,' began Mr. Pallersberg, with heightened colour.

'But it would be very odd if you did not think of it,' rejoined Sigmund, 'for ideas of this kind

force themselves on such occasions into the mind of the most disinterested of human beings!'

This speech carelessly uttered gave serious offence, unnoticed, however, by the young officer as he passed under the arched way, and entered the court of the castle. When he alighted and strode with head erect into the flagged hall, Pallersberg looked after him, while thinking it was very evident that Sigmund was resigned to a loss that had changed his position in the world so advantageously.

Murmuring something about 'want of a sense of decorum,' Pallersberg ascended the narrow staircase leading to his apartments, and there expatiated to his wife in no measured terms on the heartlessness of the future heir of Westenried. Alas for human nature! The words that had given him such umbrage were but the expression of the thought that had actually passed through his mind on hearing of Count Waldering's death, and his wife, who now nodded a sorrowful assent to all he said, had frequently and without reserve deplored the change in their son's prospects; but then *they* were not, as she justly observed, the late count's relations—they were merely—friends.

CHAPTER II.

THE FAMILY.

SIGMUND WALDERING sought and found his father in the room that had been used by his late uncle for transacting business, nor was he in the least surprised to see him seated at a writing-table covered with papers, and so engrossed by the examination of them that the entrance of Sigmund was for a short time altogether unnoticed.

As a rule that had been for some generations without exception, the eldest son in the Waldering family had been a soldier, the others lawyers or foresters according to choice; and as want of intellect was not common among them, they had generally been prosperous, and advanced to high rank in their respective professions. Sigmund's father was a Director of the Court of Appeals, and from the time of his elevation to that position, had been by his family, friends, and acquaintance called 'The Director.' Either his gastronomic tastes or the sedentary habits incident to his profession had impaired the symmetry of his

figure, or rather given it an unusual degree of corpulence; but his head was still handsome, with its well-formed features, intelligent eyes, and still thick hair, just enough powdered to conceal the grey tufts in the vicinity of his temples. He had been long a widower, and altogether indisposed to accept any of the rational matches offered to his consideration by his various female acquaintances, who, invariably supposing objections on the part of his sons to be the cause of his refusals, continued with untiring perseverance their matrimonial speculations. Separated almost constantly by the intranquil state of Europe from his brother, who had early entered the army of the then Emperor of Germany, and greatly disappointed by his having married the widow of an Irish officer in the Austrian service, just when his advanced time of life had encouraged reasonable hopes that he would remain unmarried, and make Sigmund his heir,—his death had, nevertheless, both shocked and grieved the Director. Having, however, fulfilled his duty of seeking his brother's remains on the battle-field of Hohenlinden, and having buried them with as much pomp as circumstances would permit, he rejoiced without a qualm of conscience in the thought that his brother's only child was a daughter, and set about

the examination of his inheritance with all the ardour of a man of business.

Scarcely any interruption but that of his son's arrival would have been welcome to him just then. Sigmund, however, had so recently escaped death, their position in the world was so suddenly changed, and their interest henceforward so completely identified, that they met with unusual emotion; and after an interchange of a few hasty questions and answers concerning the movement of the army, it may be taken as a tribute to the real or supposed goodness of the Director's heart, that his son gravely deplored their recent loss and said not one word about the uselessness of regrets or the effects of war upon the feelings.

'Yes, Sigmund, this is a severe affliction, and if so to us, what must it be to my brother's widow?'

'I suppose she is inconsolable,' replied Sigmund, 'though of course my uncle has provided well both for her and my cousin Hilda.'

'Her own fortune was very considerable, you know, Sigmund; and she allowed it to be employed in paying off the mortgages that encumbered Westenried. This is secured to her, and a will has been found leaving everything at your uncle's disposal to her and Hilda. One cannot blame him for taking care of them!'

'Of course, not; but her claims on the estate are rather alarming, if she demand immediate restitution of her fortune.'

'She will not do so, if you declare your intention of fulfilling the engagement made last year with your uncle concerning Hilda.'

'Time enough to talk of that some years hence,' answered Sigmund; 'it would be absurd my engaging myself formally to such a mere child!'

'Yet something of the kind will be necessary,' suggested his father; 'otherwise, I fear your aunt will persevere in the plan of returning to England or Ireland as soon as the state of public affairs will permit her.'

'Who has put this idea into her head?' asked Sigmund, almost angrily.

'Her daughter by her first husband, who, you must have heard, came back to her a couple of months ago during the truce. She has been educated in Ireland, greatly dislikes Germany, and openly expresses her desire to return to the uncle and aunt with whom she has passed almost all her life.'

'But,' said Sigmund, 'I understood this daughter was scarcely of an age to have influence on such an occasion.'

'It seems she has. My sister-in-law explained

that your uncle's dislike to, or rather jealousy of, this daughter was the cause of her being intrusted while still an infant to the care of an aunt who was married and lived in Ireland; that now but just returned to her after an absence of twelve years, she was unwilling to make their union unpleasant by a compulsory and no longer necessary residence in a land that was disagreeable to her. When I took this into consideration, and remembered that my sister-in-law had numerous relations both in England and Ireland, I confess I was completely at a loss to discover anything that could be urged as an inducement to her to prolong her stay here.'

'All this may be true,' replied Sigmund; 'but how, in the name of all the saints, are we to raise such a sum of money in times like these?'

'That is precisely what has been the subject of my thoughts for the last half-hour,' said his father; 'and I can discover no other plan than that you should profess your desire to fulfil your late uncle's wishes by entering into an engagement with your cousin Hilda, and declare at the same time your wish that she should not leave Germany. This, I think, will suffice; for it is more than probable that the daughter your aunt has had with her constantly is dearer to her than

the one who so unreservedly proclaims her preference for other relations.'

'I cannot say that I like binding myself in this way,' said Sigmund.

'Remember,' continued his father, 'that Hilda will inherit a considerable fortune from her mother; your uncle alone has left her enough to satisfy a reasonable man; and, besides this, she has expectations from her grand-aunt in Ulm that if fulfilled will make her far more wealthy than any of our family have ever yet been.'

'I don't say that I will not marry her when she grows up,' said Sigmund; 'but don't you perceive that she, being now but a child of twelve years old, will be at liberty to refuse the fulfilment of the engagement some years hence, while I am bound to await her decision? Under such circumstances, you can hardly expect me to consent to a betrothal.'

'Then,' retorted his father, 'you have no right to interfere with your aunt's arrangements, and she will assuredly go with both daughters to England, while we may prepare to fell the woods here as the only means of raising such a large sum of money in times like these. This is, however, your affair—not mine; for, having no intention of ever living at Westenried, I give you full power to fell and sell every stick on the property!'

'She cannot travel to England now, even if she wished it,' observed Sigmund in a voice of extreme irritation.

'Nor need you come to a decision until there is either a peace or truce that will admit of her leaving us,' answered his father, rising from the table, pushing aside the papers on it, and walking deliberately out of the room to end a conversation that was so evidently verging towards one of those ebullitions of temper to which Sigmund not unfrequently yielded.

More displeased than obliged by his father's forbearance, Sigmund strode up and down the room, with firmly-folded arms, until a slight movement of the door leading into another apartment, and a soft voice demanding permission to enter, attracted his attention.

'Come in!' he cried harshly, and a very young girl availed herself of the gruff permission, who at any other time and under any other circumstances would not have failed, notwithstanding her extreme youth, to attract him in no slight degree; but the dark-blue eyes and delicate loveliness of Doris O'More's face and figure were just then ineffectual to dispel the scowl that lowered on Sigmund's countenance, when it occurred to him tnat in her he saw the person whose longing for a more cheerful home than

Westenried was about to cause him so much embarrassment.

She had spoken French, but, supposing that the language of 'the enemy' had given umbrage, now began, with some difficulty, to make inquiries in German about her 'cousin Frank,' who must have been with Count Waldering at the battle of Hohenlinden.

'How should I know anything about your cousin?' he asked, sternly.

'I thought, perhaps, that, as he was with your uncle, and as you were able to send a messenger from Hohenlinden to Munich to announce *his* death, you might have obtained some information at the same time concerning Frank.'

'I made no inquiries about him,' said Sigmund.

'You were able to give Mr. Pallersberg the assurance that his son lives,' continued Doris, 'and it is for this reason I apply to you: they were together—in the same troop; you spoke to one—you may have seen the other.'

'I did *not* see him,' said Sigmund, beginning to feel a very unamiable satisfaction in watching the varying colour and increasing agitation of the young girl.

'If,' she began, with trembling lips, 'if—he—had—fallen—would they have brought him here for burial?'

'Certainly not. What right has he to be buried at Westenried?'

The rudeness of this speech seemed to strike her: she had mistaken his short answers for a desire to spare her feelings; but now suddenly perceiving that illwill or anger could alone prompt such harshness, she caught at the shadow of consolation, and, trusting that one so hardhearted was not likely to conceal any painful intelligence, her hopes revived, and she turned away, murmuring, 'As you have not heard of his death, we may hope to see him again!'

'Your chance is not great,' said Sigmund; 'for your cousin was last seen with my uncle completely surrounded by the enemy, and, if not killed, he is certainly missing, as he was not with his regiment when I spoke to Pallersberg after the battle.'

'And what will be his fate, if missing?'

'Years of imprisonment in France,' answered Sigmund, as he walked across the room and only stopped for a moment to look back at the poor girl, who had covered her face with her hands in the vain endeavour to hide her grief from so unsympathising an observer.

CHAPTER III.

FRIENDS.

SIGMUND WALDERING left Westenried the next morning to join his regiment; his father's departure for Munich followed a few hours later. About noon the widow and her daughters had removed to the second floor, while a single room on the first gave evidence of still being inhabited, not only by the open jalousies of a couple of windows, but also by the not unfrequent appearance of a youthful head and figure that, careless of cold, leaned out to feed and watch the flights of the inhabitants of an adjacent dovecot, or follow with interest the various occupations of the busy pecking fowl that with permission had taken up their residence in the offices for the winter, two or three small openings having been considerately made in the wall for their convenient ingress and egress. Geese were there stretching their necks and flapping their wings with horrid screams, indicative of dissatisfaction that the frozen lake no longer afforded them their accustomed recre-

ation. Waddling ducks consoled themselves by gobbling up everything eatable that came in their way; a turkey-cock strutted about unnoticed by a pair of magnificent peacocks perched on the icicled iron railing of the fountain; some pet rabbits scampered, and a tame raven hopped about the court; so when we add that a couple of cats gracefully boxed each other's ears when an opportunity offered, and dogs were ready to bark at any unusual sound, it is to be hoped that some good-natured readers will not altogether despise the Director's youngest son, Emmeran, for braving the hard frost of a December day, in order to contemplate such ordinary sights; the more so, as, although of a decidedly meditative disposition, he probably just then made no moral reflections on, or playful comparisons between, the animals before him and persons of his acquaintance. If one might judge by the expression of his countenance, the pompous turkey, aristocratic peacocks, gluttonous ducks, the quarrels of the cats, the snarling of dogs for the possession of a bone long bleached and marrowless, afforded him amusement in exact proportion to the noise and commotion caused, and, as far as lay in his power, he increased the propensity to strife by frequently flinging bread among the combatants.

The cold was, however, intense; and ever and

anon a retreat into the room became necessary, where, with the latest work of Jean Paul in his hand, and student cap still on his head, he walked up and down, reading and meditating alternately.

Emmeran Waldering was a tall, delicate-looking young man, without any pretension to good looks, but gentlemanlike, and of not altogether uninteresting appearance in his black velvet elaborately-braided Teutonic coat, open shirt-collar, tight pantaloons, and boots, or rather buskins of soft black leather that could be drawn over the knee at pleasure. The smart little blue and silver *cerevis* cap was planted so jauntily on his head, that it seemed more intended to keep his long fair hair in order than for any other purpose. The length of his pipe would have satisfied a Turk, and there were blue and white tassels pendant from it that might have served as terminations to bell-ropes, with the addition of the blue and white ribbon that he wore across his breast. His position in the world to a German eye was as plain as if he were habited in a military uniform. He was a student of the corps 'Bavaria,' and to a nice observer the fact that this badge ribbon had three stripes—that is, was 'white, blue, white,'—sufficed to indicate him as a person of importance in his corps—one to be consulted in

cases of 'scandal,' which means in English, 'rows,' and the duels that generally followed such events.

Before Emmeran had acknowledged to himself that solitude was becoming irksome, Mr. Pallersberg appeared at the door, and informed him that the first detachment of Austrians having reached the village he was going there to see his son, adding, that if Emmeran had nothing better to do he might as well accompany him. A request had been made for forage, which he believed it would be necessary to attend to.

'Of course, of course,' cried Emmeran, 'and bread and wine, and—and—in short, whatever we have to give.'

'In fact,' said Pallersberg, 'we may as well be generous, for what we do not give them may be taken by the enemy before long.'

'Do you mean that the French are following?'

'I fear,' he answered, 'there is but little chance that they will not do so.'

'Indeed! then let us destroy our causeway and raise the drawbridge.'

'Of what use,' said Mr. Pallersberg, 'when the lake is frozen as it has not been these ten years, and the ice so strong that they can walk into the orchard and court at pleasure?'

'This frost is a confounded nuisance,' said

Emmeran, 'and I was foolish enough this morning to rejoice in the prospect of skating. What are we to do?'

'We must conceal the plate and other valuables in the panelled ceiling of the dining-room, where a place was made for such things in times even wilder than these.'

'And you really think that such precautions are necessary?'.

Pallersberg shrugged his shoulders. 'Let us not lead even our enemies into temptation,' he said. 'Should we have time, I propose removing wine and linen to the little Chapel-island in the middle of the lake: they will scarcely have time to rummage the vaults of the church-ruin there. It is the habit of the French to make war support war, and they will assuredly help themselves to whatever they want. And now I believe I must beg of you to walk on quickly, as my son has but one hour to remain in the village, and my wife is waiting on the bridge intending to accompany us, and is taking with her provisions that will make her very welcome not only to him but also his comrades.' He turned round before leaving the court, and, looking up to one of the windows, raised his hat.

'A pretty girl that Mademoiselle O'More,' sai Emmeran, following the direction of his eyes and

raising his cap, although the young lady's arrival at Westenried had been so recent that he had not yet had an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with her; 'a very pretty girl!'

'Yes, poor child!' answered Pallersberg; 'and she is just now in despair about her cousin, who has been missing since the battle of Hohenlinden. She wanted to go with me to the village to make inquiries in person, but her mother very properly would not consent, and I consoled her by a promise to send a messenger in case my son should be able to give any further information concerning him. She knows nothing of such scenes excepting from books or newspapers, and expects a list of the killed and wounded three or four days after the engagement.'

As Emmeran and Mr. Pallersberg disappeared beneath the archway, Doris slowly left the window and returned to the drawing-room, where her mother was seated at a small work-table cutting up bits of muslin and crape, in the vain endeavour to make herself something resembling that hideous and essentially English head-gear—a widow's cap. Her eyes bore traces of long-continued weeping, but the swelled eyelids, though red, were tearless, and there was a look of resolute self-control, not only in the small features of her still interesting face, but even in her figure, and the manner in

which she pursued her occupation. Stooping towards her youngest daughter Hilda, who sat on a footstool beside her, she whispered a few words, probably a request to be left alone with Doris, for the young girl instantly rose, kissed her mother's cheek, and went out of the room without speaking.

'Doris,' observed the Countess Waldering after a pause, 'I regret much being obliged to refuse this first request that you have made, but the village when occupied by troops on the march is no fit place for you, and Mr. Pallersberg will get from his son all the information that can be obtained about Frank.'

Doris walked to one of the windows without replying, and appeared to gaze on the half-frozen lake and trees white with frost, while large tears fell slowly from her eyes.

'Could I have foreseen,' continued her mother, 'had I even thought of the possibility of what has occurred, I should never have desired your coming abroad; but a peace seemed so certain, that it was natural I should take advantage of your being able to travel here with our friends the Beauchamps. You can understand my wish to see you again, and regain or obtain your affection, Doris?'

'Yes, mama, but it is a useless effort if you expect me ever to like you as well, or half as

well, as my aunt, who has been, indeed, a mother to me!'

'Never mind what I expect, Doris. Let me hope that in time, without any diminution of your regard for your aunt, you will give me also a place in your heart.'

'I don't at all—dislike you—' began Doris.

'That will do for a beginning,' said her mother, with a faint smile.

'But,' continued Doris, turning completely towards her, 'but I could almost do so when I remember that *your* letters were the cause of dear Frank's leaving his country, and being now either a prisoner or dead; perhaps lying still unburied on the snow at Hohenlinden, a disfigured frozen corpse like Count Waldering's!'

Fresh tears started to her eyes at the picture her imagination had conjured up, and she glanced indignantly at her apparently unmoved mother.

'Thank Heaven!' she continued, 'Feargus was less dazzled than Frank by your description of the glories of the Irish Brigade, and the manner in which our national names were respected on the Continent! Poor Frank's head was completely filled with the idea of becoming Field Marshal, or Grand Croix of the Theresian Order, a Count of the Roman Empire, or I know not

what all, like the O'Reillys, O'Connors, O'Donnels, and all the rest of them!'

'In times such as these,' said her mother, 'his chances were as good as those of any of his predecessors, and the letter that so displeased you, Doris, was written at the urgent request of your uncle.'

'My uncle?'

'Yes, he wrote telling me of the embarrassed state of his affairs, and the difficulty of providing for seven sons more inclined to live at Garvagh in gentlemanlike idleness, than to pursue the studies necessary for the professions they had chosen. He even asked me to use my influence with your stepfather to obtain admission in the Austrian army for both Frank and Feargus, and was thankful that my letter had induced one at least to leave home, and make an effort to become independent.'

'And now?' asked Doris, 'what will he say now?'

'I know not,' answered her mother, 'but I have resolved not to write until I have some certain information to give him.'

At this moment the sound of hasty steps on the flagged floor of the corridor attracted their attention: it was that of booted, spurred feet, and in breathless anxiety they awaited the approach of the expected messenger from the village, simul-

taneously answering the hurried knock which scarcely preceded the entrance of a young man in the uniform of an Austrian dragoon. He seized the extended hand of the Countess Waldering and pressed it repeatedly to his lips, while incoherently uttering some words of condolence, made more than intelligible by his extreme agitation.

'I thank you sincerely, Captain Pallersberg, for this attention,' she said in a low voice; 'it is most kind, for from you alone I can hope to hear all that occurred at Hohenlinden.'

'And unfortunately,' he answered, 'unfortunately I have but a few minutes at my disposal; we march in half an hour.'

'Then tell me only of the fate of that poor boy, who, perhaps, has escaped death, as you did not see him fall.'

'No; but he was with Count Waldering and in imminent danger when I last saw him, so gallant and so fearless that we can only console ourselves with the hope that he has been overpowered by numbers and taken prisoner. I mentioned this to Sigmund Waldering, but, as he was not personally acquainted with your nephew, he may have forgotten to speak of him.'

'Not exactly,' said the countess; 'for he told my daughter, when she asked him, that Frank was either killed or a prisoner; but we hoped

that since then you might have obtained some further information.'

'None on that subject,' he answered sorrowfully, 'but more on another than you will like to hear. The French are not only following us, but their right wing having crossed the Inn at Neubayern, there is little doubt of their being here directly. My father agrees with me in thinking it better for you and your daughters to remove to the vaults under the ruin on the Chapel-island. The chances of a thaw are too slight to admit of a thought of refusing entrance to the castle, but the water round the Chapel-island is not likely to be frozen at present; some arrangements can be made for your reception there, and the discomfort, though great, will not last long.'

'That is of little importance,' she said; 'and if there are others who wish to take refuge in these vaults, I must request your father not to reserve them for me alone.'

'The villagers,' he answered, 'propose sending most of the women and all the children out of the neighbourhood, and intend to drive their cattle into the woods. Whatever cannot be removed or hid must be sacrificed, and they are tolerably resigned, though they have been obliged to supply our troops with rations and forage. I trust that this first may also be the last time that the

chances of war will bring the plague of marching armies, whether friends or foes, to this hitherto so fortunate place.'

Here the sound of trumpets caused him to cease speaking.

'I know what that means,' said the countess, 'and shall not attempt to detain you. I wish I could—perhaps I can be of use. You mentioned, in a letter to your father, that you were badly mounted. Count Waldering left one of his horses here for me that is quite at your service, and you shall be put into immediate possession.'

The young man made a faint attempt to decline the welcome present, to which no attention was paid; but when they reached the court and the well-known charger of his late colonel was led from the stable, he stooped down, on pretence of assisting the groom to fasten the bridle, in order to hide his emotion.

'I have given you a good master, old fellow!' said the countess, caressing the horse's head as he bent it towards her and stamped his forefoot impatiently on the pavement. 'I wish I could add a talisman to save you and your rider from the fate of him who left me on this spot but a few weeks ago! If warm wishes for your safety and fervent prayers for the speedy termination of this war be of avail, Captain Pallersberg, I can promise

both. Farewell and speed well!' she added, as once more the sound of trumpets from the village reached them; and the young officer, after a vain effort to express his thanks, vaulted into the saddle and dashed, almost in full career, over the drawbridge and up the hill beyond.

'He rides well,' said Doris, musingly, 'and was perhaps kind to Frank. I—believe—I could like him, though he *is* a German!'

CHAPTER IV.

FOES.

THE court of Westenried, during the remainder of the afternoon, was a scene of turmoil and confusion; the peasants' wives brought every portable object of value there, and could with difficulty be made to understand the impossibility of attempting a defence of the castle. They entreated permission to put some of their effects in the cellars, and, notwithstanding Mr. Pallersberg's assurance that they were by no means safe there, packed every place unoccupied with beds and boxes.

The Countess Waldering brought some order among the despairing women when she proposed their sending money, trinkets, and whatever else they had time to remove, to the Chapel-island, and a superstitious feeling of security took possession of them all when they found themselves preceded to the flat-bottomed boats by the priest carrying the silver vessels of the church. These boats, the hollowed trunks of trees, were shoved along the ice as far as it reached, then launched

on the water, and before long the little Chapel-island became for the time being visibly inhabited, the bright colour of the women's dresses gleaming in the sunshine beneath the leafless trees and contrasting strongly with the grey walls of the ruin and snow-covered ground.

'This will never do!' cried Pallersberg, impatiently; 'these women will spend the whole afternoon putting their goods in order, instead of returning here and giving us time to make some arrangement for you and your daughters' comfort before the French arrive.'

'We shall not want much for so short a time,' answered the countess, 'and we are well provided with fur and warm clothes, so that with a basket of provisions we shall do very well. I have left the keys in the wardrobes, as I do not wish them to be broken open in the idea that they contain things likely to be useful. What I possess of real value is in this trunk, and we are ready to emigrate the moment the boats return.'

'Mr. Pallersberg,' said Doris, coming from the stable, where she had been looking round her anxiously, 'what have they done with Brian Boru?'

She had given this not very appropriate name to a young Hungarian horse, her mother's first present to her after their meeting.

'*Bronboor*' has been turned into the marsh,' he answered, smiling; 'and I am much mistaken if he allow himself to be easily caught. I wish I were as sure of finding all our live stock safe after our unwelcome visitors have left us as of seeing him, with disordered mane and mud-incrusted legs, on the margin of the lake.'

'And my pony?' cried Hilda; 'where is he?'

'The pony,' said Emmeran, joining them, 'is safe; his diminutive proportions will prove his best protection. And now, Hilda, ask your sister if she will acknowledge our relationship, and permit me to call her "cousin"?'

'Are you, in fact, my cousin?' asked Doris.

'Do not examine this relationship too accurately, Doris,' interposed her mother; 'remember that I consider Emmeran *my* nephew.'

'He is, however, only a cousin by marriage, not a real *cousin-german*,' said Doris.

'No, I am only a *German cousin*,' he replied, laughing, as he bowed over her reluctantly-extended hand, and lightly touched it with his lips.

Before Doris had recovered from her surprise at what appeared to her a foreign and very theatrical mode of commencing an acquaintance, Madame Pallersberg came towards them directing the carriage of baskets filled with clothes, among

which Emmeran, to his no small astonishment, observed various articles of his own apparel, the appearance of which was justified by the explanation, 'that there was no time for long consultations; clothes were just the things of all others likely to be carried off by the French republicans, who were notoriously in want of them—especially trousers!'

Just then observing a wounded Austrian officer and some soldiers carried into the court, she hurried towards them, followed by Doris and her mother, while Pallersberg first shouted vainly to the loiterers on the Chapel-island, and then with Emmeran's assistance commenced drawing the trunks, baskets, and bags across the ice to the water's edge.

The sun was already perceptibly disappearing behind the wooded hills, and shining red with expanding disk through the frosty evening fog; an orange-tinted sky was reflected dimly in the still unfrozen part of the lake, and a coloured brilliancy pervaded the crystals of ice that began to form a crust on every tree, pine needle, and still visible shrub. Before long Pallersberg found the same process commencing on the long hairs of his moustache, and was raising his hand to remove what he considered more attractive on

plants than human hair, when he heard a distant *ranz des vaches* blown through a cow-horn, the long, low, peculiarly inharmonious sound of which seemed to startle in a peculiar manner every hearer. It was, in fact, the signal from a neighbouring hill that the French were in sight, and one of the boats instantly left the Chapel-island, into the other the peasants crowded in a disorderly manner, while Doris, Hilda, and their mother ran through the orchard, and sprang upon the ice, followed by servants carrying camp-stools, a table, and some bedding.

'I knew they would dawdle about the vaults until the last moment,' muttered Pallersberg. 'March! off with you!' he cried impatiently to the terrified peasants, as they tumbled over each other in their endeavours to leave the boat; and then he added, as he assisted the countess into it, 'The gardener and his son will remain on the island with you, and well armed, though I do not think there is the slightest chance of your being disturbed or alarmed there.'

'Nor do I feel any anxiety on that account,' she answered; 'for though the lateness of the hour may induce the enemy to pass the night in the village and its environs, it is not probable that any one at this time of year will have any

inclination for a cold bath; and as we shall have both boats on the island, no one can reach us otherwise than by swimming.'

'Just what my son said when he proposed your going there: for my own part, I only thought of the vaults as a place of safety for our wine and linen. Adieu, madame. I wish it were this time to-morrow, and I stood here to release you from imprisonment.'

The Chapel-island was in the middle of the broadest part of the lake, and was, and is still, covered with beech-trees of unknown age, chiefly preserved for their leaves, which, in forest districts, are considered a good substitute for straw. Through the denuded branches some undefined masses of ivy-covered walls were visible, and in the midst of them the ruin of a chapel evidently of later date, but roofless, and the long narrow windows retaining their form alone where the carved stone frames had resisted the dilapidations incident to constant exposure to the weather.

In the interior of this ruin a sort of shed had been erected to shelter the trap-door entrance to the vaults that had formerly been concealed by the altar. These vaults were, of course, said to be haunted, and many a courageous man in the neighbourhood would have declined passing a few hours of the night alone in them. Never-

theless no vestige of human bones had been found there within memory of man, and both extent and architecture were calculated rather to lead to the supposition that they had been the cellars, perhaps also the prison, of the stronghold that had stood on the island in the tenth century, and which had been built so as completely to command the Roman road, still easily traceable through the wood on the opposite shore, in appearance a long, straight, green avenue—masses of stone on which grass but not trees could flourish.

If Doris had felt any dismay on descending the steps conducting to these vaults, it was quickly overcome; for the resemblance to the hold of a ship occurred to her the moment she reached the ground and looked round the space but dimly lighted by a lantern which the gardener carried before her mother. Boxes, trunks, and parcels were heaped in a not altogether disorderly manner around the place below the entrance, while the adjoining cellars, though furnished with grated openings for the admission of air, had been left unused, the rows of bins being supposed to have originally served as receptacles for coffins.

Though Doris was not more afraid of ghosts and goblins than other young people, perhaps even less so, she never boasted of her courage, and openly expressed her dislike to hearing 'little

noises' at night, or having 'queer dreams;' yet being blest, *or* the contrary, with a vivid imagination, the long narrow niches had made a disagreeable impression on her also, and she perceived with satisfaction that her mother moved on to the more open space immediately beneath the church—a crypt-like place, with its low closely-vaulted ceiling supported by two rows of short, thick, rough stone pillars. Against the dark walls, bright-coloured bedding was heaped; for most of the peasant women had made an effort to save at least their best bed from the enemy. On these Hilda made a few childish bounds, stumbling afterwards over the linen and Sunday clothes that lay beside them, and finally seated herself on the ground in order to examine at her leisure the numerous crucifixes and prayer-books reverently placed together by the peasants. Doris, when called upon to look at them, observed that the care taken of them showed much religious feeling; but in point of fact they would have been in no danger whatever, and might as well have been left in the houses.

'I'm not so sure of that, miss,' said the gardener; 'for since the French have left off being Christians, they would as willingly light a fire with them as with chips!'

'I only meant they would not take them away with them,' replied Doris.

'It is one of the misfortunes of war,' observed her mother, 'that more things are wantonly destroyed than used from necessity; and this not only by enemies, but also by friends, and not unfrequently even by soldiers moving about in their own country during war time.'

'But, mama, I wonder the officers don't interfere on such occasions.'

'So they do, my dear, but it is impossible for them to be everywhere, and little time is necessary for much mischief.'

'I am sure,' cried Doris, 'that English troops would never take anything from poor villagers without paying for it—no, not even if they were enemies!'

'And I am afraid, Doris, that men so much resemble each other, that all civilised nations are much on a par in war. This morning the Austrian troops slaughtered several oxen, but gave the proprietors written acknowledgments, which will entitle them to compensation from government: that the French will take whatever they want from their enemies, and without acknowledgment, is a matter of course.'

'The poor villagers!' said Doris, 'how I pity

them, and how I hate the French—all—all—from the First Consul in his cocked hat to ou émigrée governess, Madame Fredon,—and from her to the smallest drummer now marching past the lake.'

'A wide range for hatred, Doris! but it is not very intense, perhaps, and subject to exceptions.'

'Only one exception, mama, and that no longer one.'

'Probably the young French legitimist recommended to your uncle's good offices by the Abbé Edgeworth?'

'Yes, mama, we could not help liking Henri d'Esterre when he was living with us at Garvagh, but now that he has gone back to France and turned republican, we quite detest him, and made a law among ourselves never to name him.'

'And how many other Frenchmen and women have you known, Doris, for that also should be taken into consideration?'

Doris was silent, and her mother continued, 'I can easily imagine your feeling some dislike to a governess whose duty it was to compel you to speak a language you young people thought it patriotic not to learn; she may also have made herself personally disagreeable: but of two, to like one is a strong testimony in favour of our

enemies, at least as far as your actual experience reaches.'

'I acknowledge that as usual you have the best of the argument, mama,' said Doris with ill-concealed annoyance; 'my *aunt* thought me capable of forming an opinion, but it is evident you consider me childish, and perhaps even more frivolous than I really am.'

'I think you have very strong prejudices, Doris, and an unreasonable aversion to everything foreign or unlike what you have been accustomed to at Garvagh.'

'My hatred of the French a prejudice?'

'As far as it concerns individuals, yes.'

"And my dislike to Germany and the Germans?'

'Also prejudice, because you as yet know nothing of either; but to prove I do not think you so childish as you suppose, let me tell you that your openly expressed antipathy to every thing and person here has given me great pain and caused me much embarrassment. I trust, however, as I am about to return to Ireland on your account, you will be satisfied with the sacrifice.'

'Sacrifice, mama? Is it possible you do not rejoice to leave such an uncivilised country and this wild uncultivated place?'

Her mother shook her head.

'Not long to see my darling uncle, who speaks

of you with such affection? Is it possible that you can dislike or be indifferent to him?'

'Quite the contrary,' said her mother.

'And my aunt? your own sister?'

'I am sincerely attached to her, and owe her a debt of gratitude for her care of you that I shall never be able to repay.'

'And then all our other relations and friends?'

'They have forgotten me, Doris, for so long and complete a separation is death to most friendships, and when I left Ireland I never intended to return.'

'Yet had my father lived——' began Doris, and then stopped suddenly on observing that her mother turned towards her with a look of piercing inquiry.

Here the gardener entered to exchange the lantern for a lamp, and as he placed the latter on the table, observed, 'The enemy is on the way to the village, and my son thinks there are horses and soldiers in the court of the castle,—at least something moving and shining can be seen through the trees. I shouldn't wonder if most of the generals and colonels were billeted on us, and they will no doubt make free with all my winter vegetables.'

'Take care, Doris,' said her mother on perceiving her following the gardener towards the

stone steps; 'take care you do not attract attention.'

'Not the least danger, mama, if I cover myself with a white cloth and represent a ghost—what a place this would be to burn salt with spirits of wine, and make people look like corpses! Oh, forgive me, I ought not to have reminded you—— I—I really seem doomed since I came to Germany never to say or do anything right. You must send me back to Ireland, mama, the first opportunity, and—forget me altogether!'

Throwing a white quilt over her head and shoulders, and letting it fall around her, Doris left the vault with rapid steps, her mother's thoughtful eyes following the movements of her slight figure as long as it remained in sight.

'Will you let her leave us, mama?' asked Hilda.

'Yes, my dear child; as I cannot make her like us or our country, she shall return to Ireland the first opportunity that offers, and you will be once more my only hope and treasure.'

CHAPTER V.

REMINISCENCES.

THE glow of sunset was over, and the frosty air had become colder, when Doris, with the gardener's assistance, mounted a heap of stones, and began to peer through one of the window-frames of the ruin. Lights glimmered from all the houses in the village that were in sight, and an inauspicious illumination of most of the apartments in the castle had already commenced. Candles and lanterns, *ignis fatuus* like, seemed to hover about the stables, throwing gleams of light on shining objects that most probably were pyramids of arms, while dark moving masses might still be distinguished on the road, and confused sounds of horses' hoofs, rattling wheels, drums, bugles, and human voices reached her sufficiently distinctly to cause the first feeling of personal anxiety she had as yet experienced.

'Do you really think there is no danger of their coming to the island?' she asked the old man who stood beside her. 'I have read of the French

crossing rivers on pontoon boats that they carry about with them.'

'Very likely, miss, when they knew what it was for; but, after a hard day's march, few of them will think it worth while to look towards an island like this, without a house upon it.'

'Very true,' said Doris; 'it was absurd my supposing such a thing at all likely to happen; but this is the first time I have ever been near marching armies, and I cannot help feeling a little uneasy.'

'You may go to bed, and sleep as sound as a dormouse,' he answered good-humouredly; 'Mr. Pallersberg has told us not to give alarm by firing gun or pistol except in the last extremity, though we may slash about us with the old swords and sabres if any one attempt a landing.'

'I am very sorry it is so cold for you and your son—' began Doris.

'Michael doesn't mind it, miss; he was often out shooting with the count in colder weather, and will be on the look-out until daybreak, when, as that is about the time I am generally up and busy, I can take his place.'

'And then,' said Doris, 'I shall come here again. It is getting so dark now one can only see the lighted windows, and the water around us that looks as black as ink. You must promise to

waken me when your turn comes to mount guard,' she added, as they descended to the vaults; 'I shall be so glad to see these hateful French marching off.'

Doris found Hilda already stretched on a mattress fast asleep. A similar bed had been prepared for Doris, who immediately took possession of it, saying, as she lay down, that, having satisfied herself that they were in no danger, she intended to sleep soundly until morning.

'I hope you may,' said her mother, reseating herself at the table so as to shade Doris from the light, while leaning forward she bent over one of the prayer-books rescued so anxiously from the dreaded impiety of the republicans, — a Latin missal belonging to the schoolmaster, which opened, as it were, of itself at the Requiem. This was not pleasant reading, and may perhaps have been one of the reasons that caused the face of the reader to grow paler and paler. Before long, however, her thoughts evidently wandered to other, though scarcely more cheerful, subjects; for her eyes slowly left the page of the book and settled on the ring of bright light thrown by the shaded lamp on the table, and rested there with the absent, almost sightless, gaze of Reverie. Was it the Requiem or her daughter's heedless words half-an-hour previously that recalled so

vividly the image of her late husband's frozen corpse? Most probably the latter; for after a harrowing recollection of all that had occurred during the few last days, a flash of memory brought before her a lofty dining-room, with lights extinguished, and on a table in the centre a dish with salt in spirits of wine burning bluely.

Intervening time was forgotten, and she was passing a Christmas in Ireland with her only sister, who had been many years married to Mr. O'More of Garvagh. Half-a-dozen wild boys were there, who with busy hands stirred the salt until the very portraits on the walls seemed turned to corpses; while the younger ones, not satisfied with their already frightfully cadaverous appearance, made the most hideous grimaces, turning to her as if for encouragement and approval. Beside her stood her sister's brother-in-law, a captain in the Austrian army, at home on leave; and well she remembered that then and there he had first alarmed her with vehement professions of love and a proposal to share his roving life in a foreign country. Never had she seen a face so disfigured by anger as his on hearing her refusal; never had she heard such violent and voluble reproaches as his for having received his attentions more willingly than those of others; her excuse that with him, as a sort of connexion, she had felt

unrestrained, being listened to with scorn and derision.

From that time she had avoided and feared Captain O'More, and greatly rejoiced when he left home before the expiration of his leave of absence, ostensibly to join his regiment in Germany. Such was, however, by no means his intention. He returned secretly to the neighbourhood, concealed himself in a peasant's house for some time, and found at last an opportunity, late one evening when she was walking alone in the demesne, to carry her off by force, and with the assistance of some lawless friends he kept her prisoner until she consented to become his wife.

Such daring acts of violence to women were by no means uncommon in Ireland at that period, or even much later, and they were judged by the public with a leniency that now seems incomprehensible. The relations on both sides endeavoured on this occasion to give a flagrant case of abduction the name of elopement, and little more was known than that the handsome Austrian dragoon had carried off an English heiress who had left Ireland with the openly-expressed determination never to return there.

The hard trial of living with a man she could not love, and whose violence she had learnt to fear, was of short duration. Some months after

their marriage he lost his life in a duel, and a year later she became the wife of Count Waldering. Thenceforward the only drawback to her happiness was her husband's jealous dislike to her infant child Doris, which not even the birth of his own daughter Hilda could mitigate; and at length she had been obliged to send her with her own maid to Ireland, and eventually resigned her altogether to the care of her sister.

It is a dangerous experiment on the part of any mother this confiding the education of a daughter to others, and for this reason, probably, boarding-schools are now seldom resorted to in England, excepting in cases of absolute necessity. Had Doris been at one, she might have felt a sort of satisfaction in the hope of obtaining freedom from restraint by the change; but having left unwillingly a happy home and idolizing relations, she met her mother almost as a stranger, and soon made it evident that a careful education had formed her mind and manners in an unusual degree for her age.

Doris's proud reserve towards her step-father during the short time they had been together her mother easily excused, when she remembered that her daughter was aware of his having been the cause of her banishment. She was even prepared for some estrangement from herself, but not for

such complete alienation as she had latterly perceived; and Doris's request to be sent back to her uncle and desire to be forgotten had wounded her mother's feelings in a peculiarly painful manner. Accustomed to be loved, the supposition that she could not easily acquire the affection of her daughter had never even been taken into consideration, and she now, with the sensitiveness peculiar to women at her time of life, began to doubt the continuance of her power of pleasing, and unhesitatingly resolved not to accompany but to send Doris back to the home she loved so much as soon as an eligible opportunity could be found.

This resolution and the preceding recollections caused the already tearful eyes to overflow in a burst of intense, but fugitive and vehemently suppressed grief, which had scarcely subsided when, raising the lamp from the table, and shading it carefully with her hand, so that no ray of light might disturb the sleepers, she placed it behind one of the stone pillars and turned towards the steps, up which in complete darkness she slowly groped her way, until she felt the freezing night air on her burning forehead, snow beneath her feet, and saw a sky full of stars above her.

CHAPTER VI.

A MAIDEN ON GUARD.

DORIS was wakened in a very unceremonious manner at daybreak the next morning by the gardener, who shook her shoulder while informing her that the enemy were already up and on the move. She roused herself with difficulty from her profound healthful sleep, seemed more inclined to consider the gardener her enemy than the French just then, and looked towards the mattress that had been arranged for her mother as if half-willing to be refused permission to leave her place of rest.

'Oh, she's been up all night,' said the old man; 'one sees that she's been a soldier's wife, and used to this sort of life—had wine ready for my son at midnight, and is making breakfast for us all now with a lamp, as we dare not light a fire.'

And at the foot of the steps Doris found her mother, who merely looked up for a moment and nodded a 'good morning.'

Doris stopped. She was not accustomed to be

treated carelessly, and though she received demonstrations of affection as a matter of course, and had hitherto returned her mother's negligently enough, she did not like the change, and began to consider what could be the cause of it.

To her credit be it said, a good many reasons occurred to her, and she approached her mother diffidently while saying, 'I hear you have been up all night—why did you not waken me and let me keep you company?'

'Because I was very glad to see you free from all anxiety, and able to sleep so soundly.'

'There was not much to be feared, mama, or you would not have allowed Janet to remain at the castle.'

'Very well reasoned, Doris, and it is too late for anxiety now, as the French are preparing to leave us as quickly as they can; an hour or two hence we may hope to hear the unmelodious signal with the cow-horn, that will, no doubt, be as welcome to you as to me.'

'Yes,' said Doris, 'I should rather like to be in my room, and able to dress comfortably.'

Her mother raised the flame of the lamp, and appeared wholly occupied with her coffee-pot.

'Mama, why did not you say "good night" yesterday evening, and why have you not wished me "good morning" as——as usual?'

A bright smile passed like a gleam of sunshine over her mother's countenance as she bent forward, and, lightly kissing her on each cheek, whispered 'This is "good night" and this "good morning" as usual, Doris.'

Satisfied with this evasion of an answer that could scarcely have been satisfactory, and relieved not to hear reproaches she feared she had deserved, Doris began to skip up the cellar-steps, trailing after her the long quilt, which she gladly drew round her as a shawl on reaching the piercingly-cold air above. It was less dark than when she had last stood on the same spot, for a gleam of light was slowly spreading over the eastern sky that began to render indistinct the expiring watchfires and glimmering candles still seen red and rayless through the mist.

Silently Doris gazed on the wintry landscape, while daylight spread dimly over it, the gardener occasionally stopping beside her, but perceptibly prolonging his excursions towards the entrance to the vaults, from which a strong odour of coffee began to emanate. At length having seated himself on the first step, whence a view of the interior was scarcely possible, he continued to descend in the same manner, resting when midway his elbows on his knees, and contemplating with a wide smile of satisfaction the preparations going on beneath.

Meantime the increasing light showed Doris a greater expanse of frozen water; she began even to see parts of the shore, some chimneys of the castle, and the outline of a window or two, when her attention was attracted by a loud noise from the shore, and immediately afterwards she saw a number of soldiers rush upon the ice, who began to run tumultuously in the direction of the Chapel-island. They were evidently in pursuit of a young man, who, in his shirt-sleeves, with wildly-flying hair, had the advance of a few steps, or rather springs. He dashed forward with a recklessness that proved his flight had been attempted in desperation, and, fortunately for him, many of the soldiers following, getting unawares on slides industriously made at leisure-hours by the village children, lost their balance, fell over each other, and, accoutred and packed as they were for a march, with difficulty and much loss of time only regained their feet when their assistance was no longer required by the two who had still contrived successfully to follow the fugitive. These did not at first appear to gain upon him perceptibly, but one soldier being considerably in advance of the other, the young man stopped suddenly, as if to recover breath. The moment, however, his pursuer came within arm's length he knocked him down with a single unexpected blow, that seemed

to stun him effectually for some time. The race that succeeded was more equal: the other pursuer was light, youthful, and probably an officer, as he was without a knapsack, and had during the short time gained ground considerably. He advanced gesticulating, and Doris could hear his shouts and orders to surrender as they almost together approached the water's edge. Interest, anxiety, and a feeling of utter helplessness, kept her motionless and silent, while the young men suddenly faced each other, one armed, the other with even his shirt torn from his shoulders in the scuffle that had preceded his escape. He seemed to feel his disadvantages keenly, clenched his hands, and advanced towards his antagonist, who was in the act of drawing his sword from the scabbard: before, however, he had time to do so, he was seized round the waist and dragged struggling forward towards the thin ice, that soon began to crack in all directions, and almost immediately yielded to their weight, one long loud crash accompanying the fall of both into the water, where the danger of getting beneath the ice seemed suddenly to terminate their animosity. The advantage was now clearly on the side of the fugitive, who, unincumbered with arms and lightly clothed, stretched out powerfully into the water, leaving the other to seek a place where he could regain

footing on the surface of the ice, and which he at length found on the spot whence the boats had been shoved off the previous day.

The soldier who had first been put *hors de combat* rose slowly and came to the aid of his officer; then, after having assisted him to mount on the ice, he raised his musket and deliberately aimed and fired at the head of the bold swimmer, who, to Doris's horror and dismay, sank instantly beneath the water. She started up, clenched her hands furiously towards the soldiers who were now returning at full speed to the castle, and, while calling her mother and the gardener, ran down the slope to the water's edge, where, apparently entangled in the overhanging branches of a beech tree, she saw the drooping figure of the young man whose desperate effort for freedom she had watched with such intense interest. That he was not dead was evident, for he panted, or rather gasped, loudly, apparently unable to make the slight exertion necessary to land.

'Are you wounded?' asked Doris compassionately. 'You shall have assistance directly.'

The swimmer raised his head, shook back the long black hair that had concealed his features, and Doris saw the laughing, handsome face of her cousin, Frank O'More!

Their mutual exclamations of delight soon

brought her mother to her side, and Frank favoured them alternately with his dripping caresses as inconsiderately as a young Newfoundland dog, the exploits of which in diving and swimming he had recently so successfully imitated.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAPITAL O.

When Mr. Pallersberg, a few hours later, gave the expected signal, and walked across the ice to receive the boat that almost immediately left the Chapel-island, he was not a little surprised to perceive an additional person in it—still more so when on a nearer approach it became evident that the said personage had taken the liberty of dressing himself in the suit of snuff-brown cloth that he was himself in the habit of reserving for Sundays and holidays; but no sooner had the wearer sprung on the ice than he shouted out a welcome, and altogether declined listening to the excuses or explanations offered by Frank, who had not ventured to supply himself from Count Emmeran's wardrobe, with whom he was as yet unacquainted.

Emmeran, without waiting for an introduction, assured him that he should be happy to share with him all that had been so fortunately rescued from the enemy, everything of the kind in the

castle and village having been carried off in a perfectly unceremonious manner.

'Did I not tell you so?' cried Madame Pallersberg, almost triumphantly turning round, though in the midst of a despairing enumeration of the mischief perpetrated in the neighbourhood. 'Did I not tell you how it would be? and did not you laugh and jest about "sans-culottes" and clothes-baskets until the French were in the very court of the castle?'

'I confess with shame that this is true,' answered Emmeran, 'and I now receive my small wardrobe as a sort of present from you; for most assuredly if my "culottes" had not been sent by you to the Chapel-island they would now be on the march to Braunau.'

'It is astonishing,' observed Mr. Pallersberg, 'the mischief these soldiers contrived to do in a quiet way in one night, and it would have been far worse if we had not had time to drive out the cattle. They were furious when they perceived how much had been put out of their reach; in fact, so much was concealed and otherwise disposed of, that the greater number of them had to move on. Those, however, who remained effectually plundered the village and ransacked the castle.'

'I rather expected,' said the countess, 'that the officers would have quartered themselves in our apartments.'

'Well, so they did, and made themselves quite at home there, too.'

'At home!' exclaimed his wife, who had only heard the last words. 'Do you call it making themselves at home the killing of every living thing about the place? Didn't I see one of these same officers, a middle-aged man, too—probably married and the father of a family—chasing the fowl about the court with a drawn sword, while a younger one who was more alert beheaded the peacocks before my very face!'

'Beheaded our peacocks!' cried Hilda. 'Oh, who would think of beheading a peacock!'

'They beheaded, plucked, and roasted them,' continued Madame Pallersberg; 'and as to the geese, I saw them springing headless round the fountain. It was a horrible sight, and—and they slaughtered our pigs and——'

'Well, well,' said her husband, 'be satisfied that no human beings lost their lives. As to the geese, I expected nothing else, and would have sent them to the water, if I had not feared it might have attracted attention to the lake and the Chapel-island, which is their favourite place of resort. I won't say that I would not have

made free with a goose myself had it come in my way when marching through an enemy's land, so let us put all to rights, and say no more about the matter.'

'Very easy for you men to talk so,' she replied; 'but I should like to know what we are to say to the poor women who put their beds into our cellars?'

'There is nothing to be said. I told them they could not choose a worse place.'

'And what has happened to the beds?' asked Hilda.

'They were pitched out of the bins with bayonets,' he answered; 'rents made in them, and consequently all the feathers were strewed on the ground, which had been previously turned into mud by spilled beer and wine.'

'Oh, mama!' cried Hilda, 'Doris was right—the French are dreadful men. I dare say they have killed my rabbits and white pigeons!'

She was right. Of all the animals that four-and-twenty hours previously had afforded Emmeran Waldering so much amusement, the dogs and tame raven alone remained—the former sniffing about the damp straw that was littered profusely in the court; the latter gravely pensive, perched on a water-spout.

Doris was a good deal disgusted to find that

the flagged entrance hall and adjoining store-rooms had been converted into stables, and that careless feet had conveyed wisps of dirty hay far up the stone staircase.

The Waldering pedigree seemed to have given umbrage to some furious republican, for not only was the glass smashed to atoms, but the parchment cut up with a sword or bayonet—want of time having evidently alone prevented the completion of its destruction.

'We must have this thing patched up some way or other before Sigmund sees it,' observed Emmeran, laughing rather irreverently.

'Its restoration,' replied Mr. Pallersberg, gravely, 'shall be the occupation of my winter evenings.'

'And,' continued Emmeran, 'while you are about it, couldn't you just give the old fellow at the foot of our tree a drapery, or sheepskin, or something to make him look less savage?'

'Dare not take such a liberty without the Director's permission,' said Mr. Pallersberg, beginning to pick the pieces of broken glass from the frame.

The countess, followed by Doris, Hilda, and Frank, were in the mean time ascending the stairs to the second story; and Emmeran, after a moment's hesitation, followed them, entering the sitting-room unheeded, and looking with some

curiosity round him, and through the open door of an adjoining bedroom, where an eager conversation had commenced with Doris's old English maid, who had insisted on remaining with the wardrobes under her care.

'After all, ma'am,' said the latter, 'we have no reason to complain, for the General that slept here was civil, and told me I might lock the presses and keep the keys; and the young man they called the Edgekong, spoke a little English, and asked a great many questions after he saw the little ivory picture.'

'Doris's picture? the miniature?'

'Yes, ma'am; he found it on the table, beside the harp, and asked me if Miss Doris did not sing Irish songs, and if we had all forgotten him, though he had been so long at Garvagh, and would remember us as long as he lived. It was the beard and the whiskers that had changed him, Miss Doris, but he does not look so much amiss after all for a republican and a sans-culottes.'

'Louis d'Esterre!' exclaimed Doris; 'it is odd enough his being here.'

'Nothing more probable,' said Frank; 'he is, of course, with Moreau, who is related to him some way or other.'

'Then I must say, Frank, I wonder you did not apply to him when you were taken prisoner.'

'For what purpose? I knew he would have required my parole, and I had firmly resolved to make my escape the first opportunity that presented itself.'

'Oh! I did not think of that,' said Doris.

Just then her mother went to the door of the room to speak to Mr. Pallersberg, who had come to consult her about the wounded Austrian and French soldiers left in the castle, to die or recover, as the case might be. She turned back for a moment to say she was going to visit them, and should afterwards go to the village—'Did Doris wish to accompany her?'

'No, thank you, mama; I know so very little German, and shall be so perfectly useless, that I believe it will be quite as well if I remain quietly here with Frank.'

'May I go with you?' asked Hilda.

Her mother held out her hand with a smile; and no sooner was the door closed, than, perfectly indifferent, or rather altogether oblivious of the presence of Emmeran Waldering, Doris and Frank drew a couple of arm-chairs towards the great green stove, that, with its Gothic ornaments, and niches containing statuettes of saints, occupied the greater part of one side of the room; then placed their feet on footstools, close to the

warmed tiles, and became absorbed in a conversation, that commenced by Frank asking Doris if she had learned at last to like her mother?

'Well, I believe I have; certainly better than I ever expected, for you see she is very good and sensible, and remarkably lady-like; but though I am sure she is very fond of me, I can see that she thinks me full of faults; and, some way or other, I never can do or say anything right, which is discouraging, when I remember how differently I was judged at Garvagh.'

'We certainly did consider you altogether faultless there,' said Frank; 'and so you are, Doris, you may take my word for it.'

'Yet mama more than gave me to understand that she considers I have been somewhat spoiled, though she acknowledges it was hardly to be wondered at when one takes into consideration that I was the only girl in the house, and had seven cousins to obey my commands.'

'Well, if we liked to obey you, I suppose there was no great harm done. I cannot imagine what my aunt would wish changed, for you certainly are as near perfection as can well be imagined.'

'I am not quite sure of that, Frank; mama has not said, but she has made me feel sometimes as if I were selfish—in short, an egotist.'

'That you are not; she does not yet know how kind and affectionate you can be when you like people.'

'Oh! she is not satisfied with that sort of goodness which is common to all well-disposed persons, but expects me to judge every one leniently, and to be kind to people I don't care about in the least.'

'Now, I must say, Doris, that is quite absurd.'

'You would not think so, Frank, if you heard her speak on the subject. I don't mean all that about the beam in one's own eye, which you know is in the Sermon on the Mount, and quite true, of course; but she says, for instance, we should never condemn any one, even when they do wrong, without considering the measure of temptation to which they have been exposed, and that in most cases it is very difficult to form an opinion of the extent of culpability.'

'It must be rather dull, talking of such things,' observed Frank, balancing his chair on the hind legs.

'No, I like it,' said Doris; 'I like talking in this way well enough, but I don't like putting it into practice. I judge of people just as I find them; I like some, and I hate others.'

'So do I,' said Frank.

'For instance, I hate the French,' continued Doris.

'And I also,' he chimed in.

'And since I have been here I am beginning to hate the Germans,' she added.

'No, you must not hate them,' said Frank, 'for I'm a German now—or at least an Austrian.'

'I don't know any Austrians,' said Doris, 'but I have taken an antipathy to some Bavarians.'

'Not old Pallersberg, I hope?' said Frank, 'for I think him a capital fellow.'

'And what do you think of his wife?' asked Doris.

'Well, I declare I don't know; a good sort of woman, rather.'

'Exactly; but because she is good in a small way to the people about here, mama expects me to overlook, or not perceive, her horrible Swabian brogue and unrefined manners.'

'People in this country don't care a straw about brogues,' observed Frank. 'Count Waldering and Captain Pallersberg thought it a famous thing that we had had that infernal old French governess at Garvagh to teach us her lingo, but they could not at all understand the advantage of my having been educated in England, or your having an English maid to improve your accent.'

'And do you know,' said Doris, 'mama calls all such things prejudices; I think she only observes what—not how—people speak. Then fancy her expecting me incessantly to admire the woods and lakes about here, without considering that there is not a gravelled road in the one where it is possible to ride or drive, or a boat on the other that is better than the float over the ferry near Garvagh!'

'I have no objection to the woods here,' said Frank; 'they are on a grand scale—something above our plantations, you must allow.'

'I should prefer a beech-tree-walk or shrubbery, such as we had at Garvagh,' said Doris, thoughtfully; 'or the long avenues, where even the bog parts were made beautiful by flowering rhododendrons and single fir-trees, with branches sweeping the heath. I am not so insensible to beauty of that kind as mama supposes, but I like grounds kept in order, and well-mowed lawns, and a garden with glass-houses, and a gardener who knows his business; and oh, Frank! I now have learned to value a house such as Garvagh—so quiet and so comfortable! I long for the carpets and curtains, and the thousand luxuries there, and especially the library, with its pleasant places for reading, where one could sit undisturbed, even with a house full of visitors.'

'Yes,' said Frank thoughtfully, 'that library is a pleasant, cheerful room,—I often think of it; but the visitors were too numerous, Doris; my father was terribly embarrassed in his affairs lately.'

'So mama told me yesterday,' she answered.

'And,' he continued, 'and that was the chief reason why I left home, and why we must hope that Feargus will soon be here too. I wonder what he is about just now, Doris?'

'Probably coursing in the bogs or out shooting,' she suggested.

'Out shooting,' he repeated musingly, and then he will come home and scamper up the stairs when he hears the dressing-bell has rung, and——'

'There is no dressing-bell here,' interposed Doris; 'no one ever thinks of dressing for dinner here as we used to do, excepting perhaps when there is company; but I believe no one ever comes here; I do not imagine we have any neighbours at all, for the people in the town are nobodies!'

'Doris,—can you fancy you see the drawing-room as they come into it one after the other?'

'Oh! yes,' she answered, her face lighting up at the recollection; 'I think I see my aunt sitting on one of the sofas beside the fireplace, my uncle standing before the fire, and Henry, and John,

and George, and Feargus,—and most probably some of the Lavilles, and Lady Mary Sullivan, and the dear old Conroys. Frank, I count the days now until I can return to Garvagh—had my stepfather lived there would have been no chance for me, but now mama has promised to return as soon as we have peace, or even a truce.'

'Promised to return to Ireland!' he exclaimed —'to Garvagh?'

'Yes, but she talks of it as a sacrifice made to me, a wonderful effort of affection which I cannot, I confess, appreciate very highly.'

'There you are wrong, Doris, for it is and must be an effort on her part, though you do not understand why, because you have been kept in ignorance of the events that preceded her expatriation or emigration, whichever you choose to call it. She did not leave Garvagh willingly, but will undoubtedly return there most unwillingly, and I will tell you the reason.' Here he lowered his voice to a sort of emphatic whisper, and, with the fluency of speech peculiar to his country, told Doris the mournful story of her mother's first marriage.

Emmeran, who did not understand a word of English, had nevertheless found watching the speakers sufficiently interesting to induce him to

remain a silent and motionless observer near one of the windows; and when Doris began to listen with evident painfully intense interest to her cousin's eloquent recital of events that had occurred before her birth, but yet so nearly concerning her, he taxed his imagination to the utmost in surmises respecting the subject of discourse.

'Frank, I ought to have heard this sooner,' she observed reproachfully, when he had concluded and seemed to expect her to speak. 'Had you told me this before we came here, I should have felt and acted quite differently towards my mother, whose only fault seems to me now, the having forgiven my father his altogether unpardonable crime!'

'Oh, come, Doris, don't take the matter so very seriously; all stratagems are fair in love and war, you know, and there was not a shadow of a hope for your father excepting in this desperate expedient, for I have heard that my aunt had a score of adorers, and more offers of wedding rings than she had fingers on her hands to place them on.'

'No excuse,' said Doris, shaking her head.

'Don't say so, dear; for if we had remained at Garvagh, and you had ever thought of marrying Henry, I won't answer for myself that I——'

'Frank!'

'Well, there is no use in talking about such things; my aunt was not the first in our family whose marriage was compulsory.'

'I hope she may be the last,' said Doris gravely.

'So do I, for it must be a damned disagreeable——'

'Now Frank,' cried Doris impatiently, 'I have told you several times that people here don't swear; it is very wrong and very unpleasant to hear.'

'Yes, dear, you certainly have reminded me often enough that people here don't swear in drawing-rooms; that people here don't drink after dinner, as in Ireland, and so on; all very praiseworthy and proper no doubt; but for a person who professes to be disgusted with everything German, as you do, I don't see why the devil——'

'Frank!'

'Well, why the deuce——'

'That means just the same thing.'

'Speak plainly, Doris, and confess that you have the old prejudice against everything Irish.'

'No, Frank, quite the contrary; but it is only since I came abroad that I have learned to appreciate Ireland as I ought.'

'Precisely what has happened to me,' said

Frank: 'I no longer wish to be taken for an Englishman, and have written to Henry to beg he will never again think of leaving off the "O" before his name: we ought to value it as the French do their "*de*," and the Germans their "*von*;" in short, as a proof that we are descended from——'

'From "decent people,"' interposed Doris, laughing; 'unfortunately, however, no one knows anything about that here.'

'But most people, I suppose, know that "O" is a peculiar prefix to Irish names?'

'Perhaps they do, perhaps not,' she answered. 'I remember the time I should have preferred a name without an "O," an English name of three or four syllables; and it is only very, very lately that I have learned to like being an Irishwoman.'

'And I,' said Frank, 'to boast of being an Irishman, and to value our "O" as a sort of stamp of my country; for as the rhyme says,

"By Mac and O
You'll surely know
True Irishmen alway;
But if they lack
Both O and Mac,
No Irishmen are they!"'

CHAPTER VIII.

NEUTRAL GROUND.

EMMERAN WALDERING had left the room unperceived, and the short winter day was drawing to a close before Frank and Doris began to feel hungry and to wonder when dinner would be ready.

'We must not be impatient to-day,' observed Doris, 'for most probably there is no sort of provision in the house, and we shall have to wait until a messenger can procure supplies from the town.'

'If,' suggested Frank, 'if our enemies have not created a famine there also. But suppose we go and inquire about the wounded; there may be some Austrians among them, and, as I suspect my aunt is one of those women who will make no sort of difference between a wounded friend or foe, we had better undertake to look after our own people, that is, the Austrians, you know.'

In the mean time Doris's mother had gone to the village, and with dismay seen the devastation caused there by four-and-twenty hours' campaign-

ing: horses had been seized and carried off, all the cattle that had voluntarily returned in the evening to their homesteads had been slaughtered, every kind of provision consumed and an incalculable quantity wantonly destroyed, while the houses were crowded with soldiers whose wounds had been sufficiently slight to enable them to continue the march from Hohenlinden, but who now lay prostrated by fever brought on by fatigue and inclement weather.

The villagers were wonderfully resigned; they seemed to feel the uselessness of complaints, were even thankful for what had been retrieved and that no one had been made houseless, and they set about putting their dwellings into order without delay. The want of bread had been severely felt until Mr. Pallersberg produced the flour he had concealed in the island; and when it became evident that the inhabitants of the castle were in no respect better off than the poorest among them for the time being, the people ceased altogether to murmur, and were as attentive as circumstances permitted to the unfortunate invalids left to their care.

Doris met her mother returning home; she looked fatigued and dejected, and, without speaking, gave her daughter a note that had been left for her at the village inn. It was from Mr.

d'Esterre, requesting her good offices for a friend and comrade compelled by dangerous wounds to remain at Westenried.

'Cannot we have this poor man brought to the castle, mama? it would be so much more convenient.'

'He cannot be moved, Doris—he is dying.'

'You have seen him?'

'Yes, and promised to return, as no one can understand or speak to him.'

'Have you any objection to my going on to the inn?'

'None whatever; but this young officer is frightfully wounded in his face, Doris, and I do not know whether or not you can bear seeing anything of that kind.'

Doris looked alarmed.

'You had better not go,' continued her mother; 'his jaw is completely shattered, and the wound of so dangerous a nature that he made extraordinary efforts to reach the next town in order to put himself under the care of a surgeon; but at last he found it impossible any longer to bear the motion of a carriage, and remained here, most probably to die a few hours hence.'

'We can send for the surgeon, can we not?' asked Doris.

'I doubt his being able to come, for there are,

of course, more wounded left in the town than here; however, your friend Mr. d'Esterre said he would endeavour to send some one, and got the address of a surgeon from the innkeeper.'

'If I thought I could be of any use,' began Doris——

'I believe,' suggested her mother, 'this unfortunate young man would be thankful for a look of sympathy if accompanied by a few words spoken in his native language, giving him the assurance that he was not altogether friendless.'

'Then I will go,' said Doris, resolutely.

'Do so, dear girl, and you may depend on my coming to release you as soon as I possibly can.'

But when her mother joined her an hour afterwards she found Doris by no means so useless as she had supposed. The surgeon had arrived, but immediately pronounced the case utterly hopeless, and without a moment's hesitation both mother and daughter resolved to remain with the young foreigner during the night that proved the last of his life. His death, which took place soon after daybreak, was the first that Doris had ever witnessed, and made a deep and painful impression. As she gazed shudderingly on the corpse, more disfigured with wounds than even Count Walder-ing's had been, she exclaimed, 'Oh! mama, war

is much more dreadful in reality than any one can at all imagine from description!'

Her mother assented, and seemed inclined to hurry her departure from a scene that now agitated her to no purpose.

'I did not think it possible,' continued Doris, looking back into the room with tearful eyes,—'I did not think it possible that I could feel so much commiseration for a stranger and a foreigner, especially a Frenchman; but it was terribly afflicting to see this poor young man die in such torture, far away from all his friends and relations.'

'And his fate is that of thousands, Doris.'

'Then I trust we shall soon have peace, mama, on any terms; for, indeed, it would be better to give the French everything they desire than continue sacrificing life in this way.'

'Unfortunately,' replied her mother, 'the more this French Consul gets the more he requires, so that while he lives I am inclined to think no peace will be of long continuance. But now, Doris, we must return to the castle, where there are so many invalids that it almost deserves the name of hospital. I fear, however, what you have seen this night will make you unwilling to enter a sick room again for some time.'

'No, mama, I will go where you go, and at least try to be useful.'

'Where the sacrifice of time and personal comfort is chiefly required, Doris, people in our position can always, if they wish it, find opportunities of being useful: at all events you have convinced me during the past night that you would not require a long noviciate to fit you for the order of the Sisters of Charity.'

'Do you, indeed, think so, mama?' asked Doris, exceedingly pleased at the unexpected praise; 'then I will assist you and Madame Pallersberg to take care of the wounded soldiers now at the castle.'

'More than the half of them are French, Doris?'

'Yes, mama; but I now understand what you said about hospital-wards being completely neutral ground.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE FAMILY COMPACT.

SOME months subsequent to the events related in the foregoing chapters the peace of Luneville was concluded between the First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte and the then Emperor of Germany. An inauspicious peace, in which, resigning the territory on the left bank of the Rhine and leaving the so-despoiled princes to seek indemnification among themselves, a disunion was caused that finally led to the dissolution of the German Empire. Emissaries were sent to Paris to remonstrate or protest against the spoliation, and Napoleon seized the opportunity of making judicious concessions in order to turn some of his bitterest enemies into friends and allies. It was on this occasion that the first separate treaty of peace was made between Bavaria and France, and consequently the political opinions of Count Sigmund Waldering, when he returned to Westenried in the autumn of the following year, were very different from those entertained by him immediately

after the battle of Hohenlinden. He came this time to accept and thank the Countess Waldering for the proposal lately made by her to remain in Bavaria and await his convenience for the liquidation of her claims on the estate; he had also to inform her that the opportunity she desired for the return of her daughter to Ireland had been found, as a family with whom she could travel in perfect security would pass through Munich in the course of the ensuing week.

'Thank you! I am, however, happy to say my daughter's wish to remain with me has induced her to give up all idea of returning to Ireland for the present.'

'Then I presume it is your intention to reside chiefly in Munich?'

'By no means. I may go there occasionally, on account of Hilda; but Doris already possesses most of the accomplishments which would have made a residence in a town desirable for their acquirement.'

'Knowing that you consult her wishes on most occasions,' he observed, smiling a little ironically, 'I may, I suppose, take it for granted that she is quite satisfied with this arrangement?'

'Perfectly. She is becoming attached to me and her sister, and beginning to feel at home here. Mr. Pallersberg is giving her lessons in German;

she accompanies him on the harp or pianoforte when he wishes to play the violin; and then she rides, and is fond of boating and gardening, and all sorts of country occupations.'

'For a year or two this may answer; but afterwards?' he asked.

'In times like these it is better not to make plans for the future,' she answered. 'I am satisfied that my daughter not only voluntarily proposed remaining here, but was more shocked at the idea of a separation than I had at all expected.'

At this moment the sound of a harp from the adjoining room so completely attracted his attention that he remained perfectly silent for some time, listening in astonishment to music that might have been supposed to proceed from the dexterous fingers of a first-rate artist.

This instrument—then so much esteemed in Ireland—had been preferred to all others by Doris, and even as a child she had played with a strength and skill that had given her a sort of celebrity. At fifteen, she might have competed with most public performers; and if her mother at times felt inclined to regret the many hours that must have been daily devoted to the acquisition of this accomplishment, she certainly found it

difficult, if not impossible, to do so on occasions like the present.

During the first pause Sigmund rose, opened the door of communication, and poured forth a flood of eulogium, mixed with professions of surprise and admiration, that were heard by the youthful performer with a composure verging so manifestly on indifference that he stopped short in the midst of a request that his 'fair cousin' would continue to delight him with her enchanting national music.

'National music!' repeated Doris; 'would you not rather hear the Austrian "God preserve the Emperor"? or—no—the "Marseillaise" will suit you better now;' and with a mischievous energy, that might have been mistaken for enthusiasm by a French auditor, she made the room ring with the ill-famed melody.

Had Doris looked a whit less pretty and graceful while enacting this piece of saucy censure, Sigmund, though a complete man of the world, might have in some way shown his displeasure; but war of any kind with pretty faces was not his habit, so he observed, good-humouredly, 'I never expected to hear the "Marseillaise" with pleasure, but you have convinced me that it is very inspiriting.'

'So much the better,' said Doris, 'for you will soon have to march to it.'

'Not so, mademoiselle; peace is signed with Napoleon, and I am most willing to arrange the preliminaries of something similar with you.'

Doris shook her head very resolutely, and scarcely seemed to touch the strings of the harp while producing a succession of sweeping minor chords.

'I am sorry,' began Sigmund, 'very sorry, that I alarmed you so unnecessarily about your cousin the first time we met;' and then added, on perceiving that his regrets obtained little credence, 'the bearer of ill news seldom makes a favourable impression, and I fear I shall require long to efface that evening from your memory.'

'Just — exactly — as long as I live!' replied Doris.

'You are not serious?'

'Perfectly.'

'Am I to consider this a declaration of hatred?' he asked, smiling.

'Consider it what you please,' she answered, carelessly, while beginning to cover her harp with its brown leather case.

'I shall make you forget, or at least forgive, this offence before long,' he said, following her as

she walked across the room towards the sofa where her mother was seated.

'I hope you may,' she answered quietly; 'for it is much pleasanter liking than disliking people one cannot altogether avoid seeing.'

His answer to this speech was a perfectly hearty laugh, so thoroughly was he amused at the complete and unexpected *sang froid* of the young foreigner. He had been surprised that she had not blushed at least a little when he had approached her, still more so that she had evinced no embarrassment at his warmly-expressed admiration of her musical talents, accompanied by looks which he had intended should convey the idea even to her youthful mind that he admired herself quite as much as her music; but he had yet to learn that Doris was so accustomed to the society of men, and considered their attentions so much a matter of course, that she attached no sort of importance to words or looks that would have put a German girl of the same age into a flutter of embarrassment and agitation.

The person who best understood the little scene just enacted was Doris's mother, and she was more amused than surprised to see her daughter retire to the most distant window, and become completely engrossed in torturing a piece of muslin in the then most fashionable manner.

Sigmund turned to Hilda, and hoped she would explain to her sister that he was not often so impatient and unamiable as on the unlucky evening they had first met.

'I have told her so,' she replied, 'but she will not believe me; she says you are proud and heartless.'

'Well,' he said, with affected earnestness, 'I must hope that time will enable me to prove the contrary; for it would be very unpleasant if she were not to learn to like me before I become her brother-in-law.'

This allusion to his marriage with Hilda was heard by the very youthful *fiancée* with childish indifference. No efforts on the part of her mother had been able to prevent Count Waldering, during his lifetime, from speaking openly and frequently of this family compact, nor had Sigmund himself thought it necessary to use any reserve on the subject either during the infancy of his cousin or now, after having assured his aunt, in a formal letter, that he was willing, when Hilda had attained her sixteenth year, to fulfil the engagement made with his uncle concerning their marriage.

The countess looked up hastily, and drew Hilda towards her, while she observed, 'I hoped to have had an opportunity of speaking to you alone con-

cerning your last letter, Sigmund: for I believe it would be better both for you and Hilda if this engagement were cancelled. Four years hence you may wish for freedom: Hilda is now scarcely twelve years old, and at that age cannot possibly decide on so important a project.'

No one knows the exact value of things or persons until the chance of their loss has become possible or probable. Sigmund Waldering had first felt well-disposed towards Hilda because she had not been of a sex to deprive him of an inheritance he had almost learned to consider his by right; and secondly, because she was an extremely pretty and engaging child; nevertheless, a year previously, on finding himself actually heir-apparent, he had risen so much in his own estimation that necessity more than inclination had induced him to continue and latterly to renew his engagement. The disposition on the part of his aunt to release him had the immediate effect of fully convincing him of the advantages of a union with Hilda, and he therefore hastened to answer:

'I cannot agree with you, my dear aunt; for, besides being in a manner bound by a solemn promise to my late uncle, I really have become so accustomed to this engagement that I cannot feel free unless made so by Hilda herself.'

'A few years hence——' began his aunt.

'No,' he said, turning to Hilda; 'child as she is, she can decide, at least, as to the continuance of our engagement. Tell me, Hilda, will you not be my *fiancée?*'

'I thought I must be,' she answered, smiling; 'but indeed, mama, I have no objection to be engaged to Sigmund, though I don't at all wish to marry him!'

'You see,' said her mother, 'it is absolutely absurd your talking to her in this way at present.'

'By no means,' replied Sigmund, laughing; 'I think we are in a fair way to understand each other. Now, come here, Hilda; you have no objection—that is, you rather like being engaged? Is it not so?

'Yes.'

'And who made you like it, dear?'

'Grandmama and Mina Pallersberg.'

'Probably, when you were in Munich the year before last?'

'Yes; grandmama said it was a great advantage my not having to lose my name, and that all I should inherit from my aunt in Ulm would remain in the family; and Mina said—' she paused.

'What did Mina say?'

BAYERISCHE STAATS-BIBLIOTHEK MUENCHEN

'That she could imagine nothing more delightful than being engaged—especially to you.'

'Indeed!' and Sigmund coloured very perceptibly, perhaps in the consciousness of having taken some pains to gain the heart of his grandmother's youthful *protégée* and companion.

'Doris thinks quite the contrary,' continued Hilda.

'So your sister gave her opinion also? I am curious to hear it.'

'She does not at all wish to be engaged,' replied Hilda, 'especially not to you, for she thinks you quite odious.'

Sigmund laughed. 'This,' he said, 'is a case of strong prejudice, which, however, I do not despair of being able to overcome. We only require time to become better acquainted; and now,' he added, turning to his aunt, 'may I hope for your permission to ride with Hilda and her sister while I remain here?'

'Of course; but remember Hilda must not attempt to leap fences, or race in the meadows with Doris.'

'I did not imagine that young ladies ever thought of such things,' he observed, glancing towards the window where Doris was sitting.

'I don't suppose they do here,' said Doris,

'because your horses can seldom be induced to take a leap.'

'You must allow me to prove the contrary,' he said, rising.

'By all means. Let us try the broad drains in the marsh-meadow to-day—now.'

Sigmund left the room, accompanied by Hilda, jumping joyously, and Doris was following, when her mother called her back.

'Doris, your sister is not to go into the meadow with you.'

'No, mama.'

'And—and—do not speak to her any more about this engagement to Sigmund; the less she is reminded of it the better.'

'Yes, mama; I suppose you fear I might prejudice her against him; but I assure you I don't intend to hate or like people until I know them, in future. You shall see me put into practice all you have said on that subject.'

'And yet,' said her mother, smiling, 'it is scarcely half-an-hour since you told Sigmund pretty plainly that you disliked him!'

'Yes, mama; that slipped out some way or other, because, you see, he certainly did make a most unpleasant impression on me that first time I saw him; and even when he was just now

laughing and speaking so gently to Hilda, I could perfectly recall his scowl, and harsh, rude manner, while answering so very unkindly my inquiries about Frank.'

'At that time, Doris, he thought you the cause of my resolution to return to Ireland, which would have inconvenienced him greatly; and to-day, when he made a sort of effort to conciliate you, he had heard from me that you had consented to remain here—an arrangement that he naturally supposes calculated to make me less than ever likely to press the refunding of my fortune; and I believe this impression will be the cause of most of his attentions to you in future.'

'Now, mama, just tell me one thing; you do not like him, do you?'

'I scarcely know him, Doris.'

'Then why did you not insist on breaking off this engagement?'

'Because Hilda's father wished it, and made the promise to Sigmund years ago.'

'And so poor dear Hilda *must* marry him?'

'Not for some years, at all events.'

'And if she then tell him that she hates him?'

'She is not likely to have any cause for hatred, Doris, though it is very probable she may not be greatly attached to him.'

'But in that case, mama, you will not allow her to marry him?'

'I shall let her do precisely what she pleases; her father's promise to Sigmund will prevent me from interfering.'

'Well, mama, I at least will remain with you, for I have resolved never to be what is called "in love" with any one.'

'A very wise resolution, Doris, and I should like you, half-a-dozen years hence, to give me the assurance that you have kept it.'

'You, of course, mama, hate all men?'

'No, my dear; why should I?'

'That dreadful marriage with my father.'

'Don't you think you had better put on your habit, Doris?'

'Yes, mama, directly; only one word—you must allow that, if my father was lawless and violent, Hilda's was vindictive and selfish. It was quite horrible his making you send me away, and hating me so unreasonably.'

'He endeavoured to like you when you returned to me, Doris, and who then hated unreasonably?'

'Mama, I never *could* have liked him.'

'You said the same of me, Doris, a year ago—and now?'

'And now I love you better than any one in the world, and will never leave you again.'

'Until you find some one you like as well, or, perhaps, a little better,' suggested her mother.

'Mama, I hope you have some reliance on me, and do not think such a thing possible?'

'Possible, probable, desirable, even, some years hence; and now don't talk any more about what you do not understand, and, above all things, learn never to keep people waiting for you.'

'No one objected to wait for me at Garvagh.'

'Perhaps not; but you are not again likely to have seven humble servants, under the name of cousins!'

'Sigmund calls himself one, and I shall put him to the proof, if you have no objection, mama?'

'None whatever; he is not likely to allow you to be troublesome.'

This permission gave infinite satisfaction to Doris, and she tried the patience of her German cousin, and future brother-in-law, in every possible way. Strange to say, her wilfulness amused him; and, while on all occasions requiring the most absolute obedience from Hilda, he yielded, without an attempt at resistance, to a tyranny that openly defied his power of endurance.

CHAPTER X.

SPARRING.

THREE years passed over in quiet monotony, only interrupted by a few months spent in Munich, for educational purposes; and the same in Innsbruck, while re-letting some houses there that had been purchased by Doris's father, and were now the property of her mother.

The Director regularly passed six weeks every summer at Westenried, while Sigmund and Emmeran paid flying visits at all seasons, and found themselves from year to year more at home with their aunt and cousins.

In the autumn of 1804, the whole family assembled to celebrate Hilda's sixteenth birthday. Cousins german and German cousins learned to live together in perfect amity, and nothing disturbed the serenity of their intercourse until Frank O'More rode one afternoon into the court, and informed his aunt that he had come to spend a few weeks at Westenried, as he began to

fear a longer absence might cause him to be forgotten altogether.

During the first ten days Frank and Doris seemed chiefly to live for each other, walking, talking, riding, and boating, as much as possible apart from the rest of the family, and, when chance gave them companions, apparently unconscious of their presence. They spoke frequently in a language which, though ostensibly English, was nearly unintelligible to their hearers, using expressions not only familiar to their family, but even in their neighbourhood in Ireland. Is there, however, a large and united family who have not their own peculiar language, composed of children's words, remarks of grandfathers and grandmothers, old servants and favourite peasants, containing a world of meaning, or producing a crowd of recollections to the initiated? The vocabulary of such languages is far more copious in Ireland than elsewhere, and was, in days of yore, more so than now, from the then habitually extensive hospitality, which brought the young people of wide-extending neighbourhoods into constant communication; when, therefore, we mention that *sobriquets* were usual among our branch of the O'More's, and then add to them the various Irish names of persons and places, Sigmund

may be excused, notwithstanding his knowledge of English, for supposing that Doris and her cousin occasionally fell insensibly into what he imagined their native language, namely, Irish, and was surprised to find that the impression made on his ear so much resembled English, as far as hissing and chirping went.

The Director, who was accustomed to find Doris willing to receive instruction in German, and ever anxious to read the new works of Goethe and Schiller, began openly to accuse her of idleness and indifference to his favourite authors; her laughing excuse that the books were not 'on leave,' and could be read when dear Frank was gone, in no way satisfying him.

Emmeran also, on perceiving that Doris would neither endeavour to convert him from his admiration of Napoleon, nor speculate with him on the inhabitants of other worlds, felt his vacation seriously curtailed of its usual amusement; and Sigmund became gloomy and discontented, in a manner that his father could only account for when Hilda's reserve yielded to Frank's cordial familiarity, and she became as unconstrained as Doris herself in her intercourse with him.

This monopolising of both maidens on the part

of Frank began at length to give umbrage, and the Director informed Hilda that he feared Sigmund would be seriously offended if she treated him any longer with such marked neglect.

'Why cannot he amuse himself with Mina Pallersberg as he used to do?' was the careless answer. 'I never was the least offended at his neglect, though it has been marked enough this long time. Mina says I have no right to expect his exclusive attention, or he mine, until we have been solemnly affianced.'

'Unfortunately,' observed the Director, 'your mother wishes to postpone your betrothal for some time longer, but if you prefer it now, I am sure Sigmund will be the last person to object.'

'Don't be too sure of that,' cried Hilda, laughing; 'I have a great mind to let you ask him, just to hear what he will say.'

'Nothing more easy,' he replied, looking towards the open door of an adjoining room. 'Sigmund,' he said, slightly raising his voice, 'Sigmund, answer for yourself.'

'I have no wish in any way to control Hilda,' said Sigmund, coming slowly forward; 'we are, as she justly observes, not yet affianced, and if she prefer this young Irish adventurer to me, I

believe there is no reason why she should not indulge the fancy; that is, supposing O'More willing for her sake to resign his cousin Doris.'

'There, uncle,' cried Hilda, extremely piqued and too unversed in the ways of the world to attempt any concealment of her feelings, 'you see how he speaks to me. I am sure,' she continued, with a vain effort to repress the tears that already stood trembling in her eyelids, 'I am sure, had my father lived, he would never have compelled me to fulfil this——this——hateful engagement.'

'You shall never be compelled by me——' began Sigmund resentfully, while his father, much amazed at the apparent wish for release on both sides, hastened to interfere.

'Come, come, Hilda, this will never do,' he said half reproachfully; 'you have lately put Sigmund's patience to a trial, that, were I a young man, I should have ill borne, I can tell you. There seems to me, however, to be jealousy on both sides, and where there is jealousy there is love.'

Hilda, who in her heart considered herself bound to fulfil the engagement made by her father, blushed deeply, and murmured some words indicative of a disposition to listen to any excuses

or explanations that might be offered; Sigmund, however, walked to one of the windows in sullen silence.

'I think Hilda,' began the Director after a pause, 'you had better make some slight apology to Sigmund, not only for your late neglect of him, but also for the strong expression used when speaking of your engagement.'

'I cannot do more than say that I should never have had an idea of not fulfilling my engagement if he had not shown himself so ready to break it off.'

'I thought,' said her uncle, smiling, 'you accused him of paying too much attention to Mina Pallersberg?'

'Oh, I don't mind his paying attention to *her*,' she answered, looking up, 'that's of no consequence; but I don't choose him to forbid my liking Frank, when, as Mina says, he is himself quite downrightly in love with Doris.'

Father and son looked at each other, and both coloured deeply.

The Director walked up and down the room for some time in silence, then seating himself beside his niece observed, 'It was very wrong of Mina to put such ideas into your head, my dear child, and I am sure on maturer consideration you will

perceive that her suspicions are utterly without foundation.'

'I don't think I shall,' she answered, apparently more amused than angry; 'Sigmund said yesterday that Doris was a perfect Saint Cecilia when playing the harp.'

'Well,' answered her uncle, 'I think so too—a saint at least—almost an angel; yet I hope you won't think me for this reason "quite downrightly in love."'

Hilda laughed: 'No, I don't, but Mina does.'

'Indeed. It seems that Mina, to say the least, is a very injudicious friend, and not very safe companion for you. I really should like to know where she has acquired so much knowledge of such matters?'

'In Munich, with grandmama, but chiefly from Sigmund; he has told her all sorts of things, and she has told me a good many.'

It would be difficult to describe the expression of Sigmund's face as he strode towards his cousin, and, laying his hand heavily on her arm, muttered, 'What has she told you?'

'What you told her, I suppose; at all events enough to make my boating and riding with dear cousin Frank very excusable, even if you should not quite like it. Now you see, Sigmund, I don't

mind your paying attention to Mina; for as she says herself, it is only because she is a couple of years older than I am, and after all means nothing serious, but with Doris the case is different; Mina says you are making yourself ridiculous, for she knows, and so do I, that Doris would reject you without a moment's consideration.'

'And is that all you fear?'

'That is all, I assure you; she does not care in the least for attentions from you or any one; she says that being romantic and falling in love is absurd, so she has resolved never to marry, and when she is old enough intends to make a will and leave everything she possesses to Frank!'

'Oh, indeed! What a pity she happens to be half a dozen years younger than he is—not to mention his chances of receiving some ounces of lead either in his head or heart, before the time comes for entering into possession of this inheritance!'

'There is no help for that, poor fellow! as he cannot leave the army at pleasure as you intend to do, though I do not think he would if he could.'

'So much the better, as he is just fit for what he is, and nothing else.'

'If you mean a perfectly intrepid cavalry officer,' began Hilda eagerly, 'a beautiful rider—a—a—'

'I mean an Irish soldier of fortune, with all the faults of his nation.'

'And the good qualities also,' interposed Hilda.

'Well, perhaps so, but even they verge on faults, if not vices; he is goodnatured enough to be easily led into folly; generous when he has nothing to give; gentlemanlike in his habits, which tempts him to extravagance; courageous, so that he is feared as a duellist——'

'You had better not go on, Sigmund,' she exclaimed angrily, 'or I shall be obliged to think you envious as well as jealous.'

'And,' asked their grandmother, who just then entered the room, 'and of whom *can* Sigmund be either?'

'Certainly not of the person in question,' he answered haughtily, while he bent his head with real or affected deference over the hand of the old lady and led her to an arm-chair.

'Hilda, my treasure, what is the matter? who has vexed you?

'They have been quarrelling, mother,' said the Director; 'but lovers' quarrels are said to be the renewal of love, and, as jealousy was the cause on both sides I am now convinced they are more attached to each other than we ever ventured to expect.'

'I don't think I was jealous,' said Hilda, playing with the long thick curls of her dark hair as they rested on the table beside her; 'in fact, I am sure I was not.'

'Nor was I,' said Sigmund, 'and you must not for a moment suppose that my father's reprimand was at my instigation.'

'Then it seems we have been quarrelling for nothing,' cried Hilda, laughing, and extending her hand, which he lazily approached, raised carelessly to his lips, and then, without speaking another word, slowly sauntered out of the room.

'In my youth,' said the old lady, shaking her head, and with it the perfectly fashionable but indescribable half-turban, half-cap, that surmounted her slightly powdered grey hair, 'in my youth, young men were different. Your grandfather, Hilda, would have kneeled at my feet, and lingered at my side, after a reconciliation; but those good old times will never return; men have lost all sentiment, and are becoming from day to day more prosaic!'

CHAPTER XI.

THE SHOCK.

SIGMUND'S sauntering step became a quick walk as he crossed the court and passed under the archway, and on the bridge his foot fell so heavily that it attracted the attention of Mina Pallersberg, and induced her to open and look out of the window of the room in her mother's apartments, which she always occupied when at Westenried. This was probably what Sigmund intended, for he turned round, raised his hat, waved it before him, and then, returning to the court, entered the garden, and walked through it and the orchard to the boat-house, where, folding his arms, he stood beside the entrance and awaited the arrival of the figure in white that he expected would soon reach the same place by a more circuitous route. He did not raise his eyes as Mina approached, but when she stood beside him and looked anxiously in his face, he asked abruptly, 'What have you said to Hilda?'

'To Hilda?'

'Yes; she informs me you have told her all sorts of things about me—and others!'

'Dear Sigmund, I was afraid she might have observed or suspected something, and so I——'

'You thought it necessary to lead her jealous thoughts into another channel?'

'She was not jealous, Sigmund—could not be, for she does not care more for you than you do for her.'

'I tell you she does, and not half an hour ago renewed her engagement with me, when I gave her an opportunity of making herself free if she had desired it.'

'And you *have* renewed it?'

'After a manner, yes—it was unavoidable.'

'And without thinking of me? Oh, Sigmund!'

'It was no betrothal—we are just where we were yesterday; but you deserve this, and more, Mina, for having brought Doris's name in question. Of her, Hilda might be jealous; of you, never.'

'Not even when you fulfil your promise to me, Sigmund?'

'I tell you never,' he repeated.

'I believe you are right,' she said, colouring deeply; 'Hilda will never be jealous of either of

us. With her beauty, rank, and fortune, she will easily find some one else that she can like as well, or better, than she does you; besides which, I do not think her capable of a strong attachment to any one.'

'Then why did you try to persuade *me* she liked Frank O'More?'

'She likes his attentions, and told me repeatedly that he was the dearest, handsomest creature she had ever seen in her life! Vanity and love of admiration make her wish to attract him.'

'He is her cousin,' began Sigmund.

'So are you,' she interposed, quickly.

'Yes; and I think her as much attached to me as she can be to any one,' said Sigmund, decidedly; and he believed this, for men are wonderfully tenacious on such subjects; 'not,' he added cynically, 'not attached as you are, Mina, for interest and affection in your case go hand in hand.'

'Sigmund, how can you be so cruel!' she cried, clasping her hands.

'And how,' he retorted angrily—'how could you dare to say that I loved Doris?'

'Because you do—I know you do,' she cried, passionately. 'I have no fear of Hilda, even with the prospect of a betrothal; but Doris has fasci-

nated you and all at Westenried—my father, mother, the Director himself.'

'So you informed Hilda, it seems; but the idea of the Director's being captivated is merely diverting.'

'No, no, no,' cried Mina, 'it is dreadful.'

'I tell you it is diverting,' he replied, 'and cannot in any way affect you.'

'It can; for would not you be the most dangerous of rivals for him? and will he not insist on your marriage with Hilda to remove all competition?'

'What a head for intrigue you have, Mina—you might be two-and-thirty instead of two-and-twenty; but your imagination is too wild on this occasion, and though he certainly did his best to patch up my quarrel with Hilda just now, I cannot bring myself to believe anything so very preposterous. Be it, however, as it may, Mina, I must forbid your enlightening my cousin on such subjects in future. With regard to your own personal concerns, it is unnecessary for me to recommend prudence.'

'Quite,' said Mina; 'but surely we might find opportunities of seeing and speaking to each other more frequently.'

'If you can manage them without compromising yourself or me, I am sure I have no objection,' he answered.

At this moment the sound of an approaching boat attracted their attention. Mina retreated under the trees of the orchard; Sigmund moved from the door of the boat-house, careless whether or not he were seen; but leaning against the sun-dried planks that formed the side, he saw through an aperture of the warped wood the clumsy boat paddled slowly into shade by the youthful soldier of whom he spoke so slightingly, and thought, in spite of himself, so highly. Not for any consideration would he have said that Frank was handsome, but as he saw him standing in the boat, his slight, perfectly-proportioned figure swinging backwards and forwards, the afternoon sun glowing on his animated countenance, he admired and hated him in nearly equal proportions.

Unconscious of observation, Frank pushed the boat to the low wall that served as landing-place, and said, while assisting his aunt to land, 'Tell Hilda she must come directly, as we intend to cross the lake, and walk on the Roman road until supper time.'

'And I suppose, if she will not join you,' said

his aunt, in reply, 'I had better send some one to let you know.'

'She *must* come,' he answered, 'and if not here directly I shall go for her;' then, stepping over the planks, he seated himself in the stern of the boat between Doris and Emmeran, the latter continuing a conversation that, though hitherto apparently carried on between him and his aunt, had been intended for the edification of Doris herself.

'Granting that spirit is the sense of being——'

'Bless me! are you still among the spirits?' cried Frank. 'I hoped my aunt would have carried them all off with her.'

'We were talking of spirit, not spirits,' explained Doris.

'Excuse me,' said Emmeran, 'but spirit is composed of innumerable free and independent spiritual beings, each of which, apart from the whole, pursues its peculiar——'

'I tell you what,' said Frank, 'if you won't stop this bothering sort of talk, I'll go for Hilda!'

'Go,' said Doris, laughing, 'we don't want you.'

This little speech gave infinite satisfaction to Sigmund; he watched Frank striding over the

benches of the boat, and for some time paid no attention either to Emmeran's look of pleasure or the eager continuation of his explanation. When he again began to listen, he was rather amused at the topic of conversation chosen by his visionary brother, and the more so when he observed that he spoke in a rather pedantic and expounding style, evidently playing lecturer to the youthful but not unintelligent hearer, who opened a little wider her large pensive eyes while listening with an air of the profoundest attention.

'You must always bear in mind that we are not purely spiritual beings,' he continued; 'we are the union of an individual spirit with the most individual and highest state of nature—the organised human body! The spirit enters by this union into time; its eternity becomes henceforward composed of periods which we may call human lives. Am I clear? Do you understand?'

'Ye—es,' answered Doris, hesitatingly; 'you mean that your soul came into your body, and will remain in it during your life.'

'I spoke of spirit in a general sense,' he answered; 'we shall come hereafter to the discussion of our "*I*," and "*not I*," and "*positive I*."'

Doris nodded gently in acquiescence.

'The spirit is to a certain extent restricted, not to say imprisoned, by this incorporation, but gains on the other hand experience of the nature of matter. The union of spirit with matter is of short duration; the human form taken by the spirit falls as systematically back into the substance of which it was originally composed, as it increased and grew to perfection. This is quite clear.'

'Quite,' said Doris. 'We grow up, and grow old, and——die.'

'Exactly; and death is the beginning of a new life for the spirit, that individual and independent continues to fulfil its destiny in eternity.'

'You mean,' said Doris, 'in another and better world—in Heaven?'

'Yes, I mean another world; and may we not suppose that we have been in one before we came here?'

'I don't know,' she answered, thoughtfully; 'but in that case I think we should have some recollection of what we had seen and heard there.'

'Why so? What do you remember of your infancy? What can you recall of your thoughts and acts at exactly this time last year? Nothing,

or next to nothing; but it does not follow that you did not think or act then, or that what you experienced is lost because you cannot bring it back to your mind distinctly. So it may be with the recollection of a former life: if it were necessary for us to remember, we should do so.'

'But it is at least remarkable,' said Doris, 'that of the millions of people who have lived in this world, not one has been conscious of having previously existed elsewhere.'

'Are you sure of that?' he asked, earnestly. '*I* at least have had moments of vague recollections—floating uncertain visions.'

'Oh, tell me all about them,' cried Doris, eagerly.

'I cannot, for I was scarcely conscious of them at the time, and unable to recall them distinctly afterwards.'

'Had you these visions in the long twilight of summer evenings?' she asked, in a low voice; 'and were you alone in a large room gradually darkening, watching from the window the lengthening shadows of the trees upon the lawn—not exactly thinking, rather listening to distant sounds that brought fitful recollections of ——?' She stopped.

'Of what?' he asked quickly.

'Of places—and things—and people.'

'That's it,' he cried eagerly; 'places and people you were unable to name.'

'But,' said Doris, smiling, 'my mother thinks I may have seen them during my infancy in Germany; and it is certain that all such recollections have ceased since I returned to this country.'

'I rather think,' he observed, slowly, 'that as we grow older we lose these recollections—they are chased by the variety of other and newer impressions. Recall the events of your past life in this world, and you will find that only a few and not very important circumstances have had the power to make an indelible impression on your mind.'

'In that I believe you are right,' answered Doris. 'I have a good memory, but on consideration I must confess that my distinct recollections are astonishingly few.'

'And yet,' said Emmeran, 'when put together they form what we call experience. At all events this view of life makes the occasional appearance of extraordinary genius less enigmatical, while it relieves one's mind concerning the otherwise

unaccountably hard lot of so many of our fellow-creatures. The consideration that in the course of time each individual spirit——'

'Hallo!' cried Frank, entering the boat-house with Hilda, 'hang me if they are not still grinding away at the spirits! Come now, Emmeran, be alive—take the oars and make yourself useful. I must sit aft, as I want to teach these girls to steer.'

Emmeran obeyed, and was soon convinced that his presence was as much forgotten by his companions as if he had been Kuno the fisherman. And, in fact, the gaunt figure and pale grave face of the student, scarcely improved by the late addition of a moustache and beard of very yellow hair, was not likely to attract the attention of the young girls, when learning to steer from an instructor for whom they openly professed great affection, and to whose society on all occasions they gave a decided preference.

But there was another observer who by no means watched so calmly as Emmeran the group at the stern of the boat. In an uncontrollable fit of jealous rage Sigmund sprang into the boat-house, loosed the fisherman's punt, and pulled out into the lake with a vehemence that instantly attracted the attention of his brother.

'Sigmund is in furious pursuit,' he observed, with a meaning smile; 'shall we let him come up to us?'

'No, no,' cried Frank, springing up and seizing his oars; 'let's have a race first.'

And a race they had, which lasted for nearly half an hour, to the great amusement of both Hilda and Doris, when, having proved that they had a better boat and were better manned, they lay on their oars and awaited the '*Grand Seigneur*,' as Frank called Sigmund, from his frequent use of the word and constant enacting of what he supposed its meaning.

'Your Serene Highness's pleasure?' said Frank, raising his hand to his battered straw hat.

'Hilda,' cried Sigmund, with compressed lips, 'I insist on your leaving that boat directly and returning back with me to the castle.'

'Why? for what purpose?' she asked, retreating as much as the space would admit from his outstretched hand.

'Because I choose it.'

'But I do *not*,' she answered; 'and if you have no better reason, I shall certainly not go into your dirty wet boat.'

'It is not the dirt nor the water that prevents you,' he retorted, angrily.

'You are quite right; I prefer my companions here to you, when you are in such odious ill-temper.'

'Rather say at all times,' he suggested, with forced calmness; and then added, 'Remember our conversation in my father's presence a couple of hours ago: either you come into this boat, or—'

To the infinite surprise of all excepting Sigmund, Hilda stood up, and, though indignantly refusing his assistance, stepped into the punt and seated herself in the stern, with a strong expression of displeasure on her beautiful features, while Frank, who had been with difficulty prevented by Doris from interfering, now pulled off his jacket, rolled it up, and, having drawn the boats close together, placed it beneath her feet.

'Thanks, dear Frank,' she said, with heightened colour; and either to show her sense of the contrast between the young men, or to punish and provoke Sigmund, she accompanied her words with a look of such unrestrained affection and approbation, that Sigmund, angry with himself for having demanded an obedience that gave him no satisfaction, more irritated than even Hilda supposed at appearing in so disadvantageous a light to Doris, now clenched his hands and resolved to end the scene by a separation of the boats. He may have observed that

Frank had scarcely regained his place, but he certainly was not aware that Doris's hand was still grasping the side of the punt, when he raised his oar and with all the strength of a powerful man in a state of ungovernable rage pushed the boats wide asunder. The punt reeled in a manner that made Hilda draw in her breath with a stifled scream; Frank staggered and fell on his face; while Doris, unable to steady herself from the unexpected shock, was instantly precipitated into the water. There was no danger for her excepting from the eagerness of the two swimmers, who instantly plunged to her rescue as she rose to the surface, each equally eager to be her life-preserver. Frank, however, fiercely pushed Sigmund aside, although the motion cost Doris a fresh immersion in the lake; but he finally brought her safely to the boat, into which, with Emmeran's assistance, he placed her, leaving his competitor to regain the punt at his leisure.

A remarkable silence was observed respecting this adventure, Doris's mother alone being informed by her of what had occurred. Between Frank and Sigmund a quarrel would have been inevitable, had not Doris informed the former that Sigmund had expressed great regret at the consequences of his violence and requested her forgiveness; but evi-

dently the mutual dislike only waited for an opportunity to explode, and Doris anxiously endeavoured to keep them apart until the ire of both gradually began to subside.

CHAPTER XII.

A HOLY-EVE ADVENTURE.

DURING the course of the ensuing week Doris and her mother heard, with a satisfaction which they found it difficult to conceal, that an encampment at Nymphenburg, near Munich, would oblige Sigmund to leave Westenried. They had found Frank very unmanageable, and all their efforts to induce him to be cautious or forbearing in his intercourse with Sigmund so utterly fruitless, that, had not Hilda joined them and for the time being not only avoided Frank, but in a measure endeavoured to propitiate Sigmund, the continual skirmishing would undoubtedly have ended in open war.

'Joy go with you!' said Frank, gravely bowing as Sigmund turned to take leave of him.

'Much obliged,' he replied, haughtily; 'but I cannot quite believe that *you* think joy will go away with me, or wish joy to accompany me. This'—he added, glancing suspiciously towards Doris, whose lips quivered slightly with a sup-

pressed smile—'this is either Irish poesie or Garvagh wit, which I do not understand.'

'It is only part of a foolish nursery rhyme,' interposed Doris, quickly—not a little alarmed at the now flashing eyes of both; 'Frank has said it to me a hundred times.'

'Then he did not mean to——'

'Come, come, Sigmund,' cried his father, who was already seated in the carriage; 'if we intend to reach our quarters for the night before dark, there is no more time to lose.'

The sound of the wheels was still audible, while Frank exclaimed, 'I suppose, aunt, that now, as Emmeran and I are not likely to quarrel, and Sigmund is quite out of the way, you will have no objection to our celebrating Holy-Eve, as we used to do at Garvagh?'

'None whatever,' she answered; 'you may melt lead and burn nuts, to your heart's content.'

'Oh! I assure you we intend to attempt much greater things than lead-melting or nut-burning, for Doris has promised to show Mina and Hilda their future husbands' faces in a glass, if they have courage to look at them.'

'I can answer for myself,' said Hilda; 'but Mina has no courage when she hears of anything supernatural.'

'Doris says there is nothing to be feared,' observed Mina; 'she has promised not to use any sleight of hand to dupe or frighten me.'

'Only a little mummery,' said Doris, 'such as going to the vaults on the island at midnight, and looking in the glass by the light of burning salt and spirits of wine.'

'Don't you think,' asked Mina, appealing to the countess, 'don't you think she might play this conjuring, or whatever it is, in a less alarming sort of place?'

'Undoubtedly. With a white quilt or a table-cloth, one of the attics would do just as well.'

'But why a white cloth?'

'To assist the burning salt in exciting the imagination and causing apprehension.'

'It will cause none to me,' said Hilda; 'I am convinced it is some jest, and she will find herself mistaken if she think to amuse herself at my expense. I shall look in the glass and see whatever is to be seen, you may depend upon it.'

'I think you will,' said Frank, 'and after all you are not at all likely to see anything frightful. Even a blue light could scarcely disfigure such features as she will——'

Doris's hand was on his mouth.

'Now, Frank, I really do not think I can

employ you as assistant if you talk in this thoughtless manner.'

'How do you know that I was not going to say she would see Sigmund's handsome face, perhaps even lit up by smiles that have been confoundedly rare of late?'

'Faces seen in this way,' said Doris, with affected solemnity, 'are seldom smiling and always frightfully pale.'

'Pray,' asked Emmeran, 'did *you* ever look in a glass at midnight before All Saints' Day?'

'Yes.'

'And saw,' he continued, 'or thought you saw, a black-haired, blue-eyed fellow, just like Frank here?'

'No matter what I saw,' replied Doris, laughing; 'let me show you the face of your future wife, if only to remove your incredulity.'

'No, thank you; there is but one face I should like to see in your magic mirror, and that one you are not likely to show me.'

'What do you mean by that?' cried Frank.

'Are we to understand that you are a despairing lover, while we supposed you a rhymer,—I mean to say a poet?'

'And why a poet?' asked Emmeran.

'Your love of solitude and moonlight led to the supposition; add to which your studious habits and the little lamp that may be seen burning at all hours of the night in your room.'

'Any other evidence?' he asked.

'Yes, your ink never dries up like other people's; and the other day when you allowed me to write my letters in your room I saw——'

'What did you see?' asked Emmeran, colouring.

'Something written, that looked amazingly like poetry.'

'Which you of course read and laughed at!'

'Which of course I did *not* read,' replied Frank. 'Written or printed verse can be known at a distance that leaves the words illegible, and you can scarcely require the assurance that I did not place it within reading distance.'

'After all,' said Emmeran, 'what matters it? You would have laughed to find I had composed a soldier's war-song!'

'Not I!' replied Frank; 'I should only laugh if you turned soldier yourself.'

'Why so?'

'Because you're a scholar, and only fit for a learned profession.'

'I don't know that,' observed Emmeran, musingly; 'I can handle a sabre as well as any of you.'

'But in our warfare, Emmeran, we have no padding for either legs or arms such as I am told is usual in your university encounters, and no friends to interfere when matters take a serious turn; and though I have no doubt you have had your rows and fought your student duels most creditably, it's not the real thing, and you had better stick to the pen, for which you have a decided predilection.'

'One is so slighted, almost despised, in times such as these, if not in the army!' observed Emmeran, looking wistfully after the three girls, who had sauntered into the garden.

'Oh it's that, is it?' said Frank, laughing; 'well, you're pretty right there; we are somewhat favoured in that quarter undoubtedly.'

'I wonder,' said Emmeran, 'is it the uniform or the profession itself that——'

'I don't know, and don't care,' answered Frank; 'but it is very agreeable, and I hope it may never be otherwise.' And even while speaking he began to walk towards the garden gate, leaving Emmeran standing by the fountain in the middle of the court with folded arms, his head bent down

and completely absorbed in the self-communing that was habitual to him whenever an opportunity offered.

It is not necessary to describe the melting of lead or breaking of eggs into glasses, that, according to German credulity, must be filled with water during the ringing of the *Ave Maria*. The nut-burning was new to Emmeran, who was untiring in putting his constancy to some mysterious personage, whom he declined naming, to the proof in this manner. Subsequently, every achievable superstitious practice, both German and English, was tried to while away the hours until midnight; but at length they became tired, seated themselves near a window, observing that it was fortunate the night, though cloudy, would not be dark for their expedition to the island, talked as a matter of course of superstitions in general, and then glided naturally and imperceptibly into a discussion of all the ghost stories they had ever heard; which, as the Countess Waldering observed (when they thought it time to look at the clock), was the best possible preparation for Doris's magic mirror on the island.

'You will let me be the first to look into it?' said Mina, with some hesitation.

'Of course, if you wish it.'

'And—and—if you please, a little *before* it strikes twelve o'clock.'

'I don't know whether or not I can agree to that,' said Doris; 'the charm lies in the midnight hour, you know.'

'I always suspected that Mina's courage would fail in the end,' cried Hilda, laughing; 'the fact is, she has heard that there is no danger of an apparition until after the clock strikes twelve, as it is from All Saints' Day to Twelfth Night that ghosts and goblins are supposed to be at liberty to make themselves visible.'

'I dare say that is the reason that midnight is the time chosen in Ireland, also,' said Doris; 'but is it not curious, mama, that though no one here knows anything of Holy-Eve by name, there should be so much resemblance in the superstition and the time chosen.'

'You might have observed the same at Midsummer, Doris, when the bonfires were made; however, if you mean to be in the island to-night before midnight, you have no more time to lose; for my part, I wish we were back again and in our beds!'

A mass of clouds covered the sky and obscured the full moon, which nevertheless gave a sombre steady light that penetrated through the branches

of the nearly leafless trees of the orchard, dimly glimmered on the surface of the lake, and made the wooded hills beyond dark and prominent.

Silently they rowed in the calm melancholy autumn night to the island, and when there Doris and Frank were much too busy with the preparations for their mummery to observe the anxiety of Mina or the unusual gravity of Hilda.

'I wish, Doris, you would let Mina look in your glass before midnight,' said her mother; 'you have time enough if you choose to do so, and it is ungenerous your trying to increase her alarm after she has confessed her want of courage.'

'Don't spare *me!*' cried Hilda; 'let me, if possible, stand before the glass while the clock is striking twelve!'

Doris laughed and disappeared with her lantern, followed by Frank carrying a basket. She led the way to the place where she had a few years previously spent a night with her mother, and Frank having been in the island during the morning, she found a roughly constructed table on which she deposited her glass, and then began to seek proper places for her dishes of salt and spirits of wine.

'Oh, Frank, this is delightfully horrible!' she exclaimed. 'If Hilda can stand here alone and

look in that glass without feeling uncomfortable, she has more courage than I have, that's all!'

'I think she has more courage than most girls,' he said; 'and we will put it to the proof, as she has boasted a good deal.'

'I suppose I may bring Mina down now?' said Doris; 'but you must go to the end of the vaults, beyond the stairs, where you can see without being seen.'

And Frank, not unwillingly, withdrew to the place proposed, for exactly there he had deposited a beard made of black lamb's-wool and an old hussar jacket that he had found in a chest in one of the attics. He had, however, no intention of masquerading for Mina, and having accoutred himself in the jacket, which was easily concealed by his cloak, and thrust the beard and a black handkerchief into his pocket, he followed his cousin up the steps, and reached the boat just as Mina was leaving it with her.

'Remember, Doris, that Mina must not be left alone in the vaults,' said her mother; 'and the sooner you bring her back the better.'

'For every reason,' said Frank, 'but especially because your blue flames are wasting their brightness on the damp vault walls, and it will soon be midnight.'

'Oh, come then,' cried Doris, taking Mina's hand and springing up the bank; 'we shall be back directly.'

'I wonder,' observed Frank, soon afterwards, 'I wonder you can sit freezing in that boat. Walking up and down the island is so much pleasanter!'

'I thought you intended to assist Doris?' said his aunt.

'No, thank you! this is nothing new to me, and the vaults are confoundedly cold.'

He walked up and down, it must be confessed, a little ostentatiously, disappearing occasionally for some minutes, and then returning to propose their going in a body to release Mina from the apparitions she so much dreaded.

In the mean time, Doris led her half-willing, half-reluctant companion down the steps, and with some difficulty induced her to approach the glass.

'You must hold my hand and walk with me, Doris.'

'Of course, if you wish it.'

They stood before the glass.

'Well, what do you see?'

'Nothing.'

'What! nothing at all?'

'Nothing.'

'Not even your own face?'

'N—no.'

Doris looked in the glass and perceived that Mina's eyes were shut firmly.

'Oh, if you close your eyes you will certainly see nothing; but all you have to see is your own face. Should you ever marry, you belong to your husband, and your face, being part of yourself—is *his!*'

'Is that all?' cried Mina, turning round almost angrily in the sudden revulsion of feeling; 'is that all?'

'I thought,' said Doris, smiling, 'you would be glad to find my conjuring a mere play upon words.'

'But I am not glad,' said Mina; 'for though terribly frightened, I should, after all, have looked in the glass, and I hoped or expected to see *him* or his shadow!'

'Well, look again,' replied Doris; 'if you really wish to be frightened, perhaps your imagination may conjure up something. *I* can show you nothing but your own face, and made all these preparations merely to try your courage and amuse you.'

Quite reassured by these words, Mina looked

straight into the glass, but almost instantly covering her face with her hands she uttered a half-suppressed scream and then burst into tears.

'What is the matter?' asked Doris, anxiously; 'did you fancy you saw—'

'No! no! no! it was not Sigmund—'

'Sigmund?'

'Yes—no—that is—he was in my mind; but I only saw my own face, as I have often thought of it—corpse-like—deep, deep under water!'

'Let us go!' cried Doris, much alarmed; 'you are talking so wildly that I cannot allow you to stay here any longer.'

'Doris! dear Doris! you must first promise not to tell that I named—that I thought of Sigmund.'

'I feel bound to be silent,' said Doris, gravely, 'for you spoke under the influence of terror caused by me. And now you must assist me to dissuade Hilda from coming here; she might, after all, be frightened, and I will not undertake the responsibility.'

The efforts to dissuade were unavailing, for Hilda was quite resolved to look in the magic glass.

'I shall not go with you,' said Doris, 'for Mina

only saw her own face, and was completely terrified.'

'I don't want or wish you or any one to go with me,' replied Hilda, resolutely.

'Then make haste,' rejoined Doris, 'or else you will find yourself in the dark, which will certainly not be pleasant.'

While they were speaking Frank had had time to hide himself in one of the vaults, and watched soon after the descent of Hilda. For a moment the quivering blue lights seemed to make a disagreeable impression; but, without giving herself time to think, she walked quickly up to the glass and gazed steadily at the beautifully-regular features that even the ghastly colour thrown on them could not disfigure. Now, so standing alone at midnight before a glass and looking fixedly into it—be it Holy-Eve or not—is very soon anything but agreeable. One's own eyes become full of alarming intelligence, and seem those of some one else, piercing one's inmost thoughts. Taking, therefore, the place and light into consideration, Hilda's courage was very surprising; but she had had enough, and was just going to turn away, when she perceived the glass reflect a figure that seemed distant, and in the expiring light so indistinct that it might be mistaken for

a shadow. It was a hard trial for the poor girl; her knees trembled, and she stretched both hands forward and grasped the planks on which the glass was placed; but still she looked steadily before her, and contemplated the pallid face of what appeared to her a wounded soldier, across whose forehead and nearly concealing one eye a broad black kerckief was bound, while the lower part of his face was covered with a thick short beard, leaving only a small portion of cheek visible.

While still gazing and doubting the evidence of her eyes, one of the lights flared wildly upwards and, previous to extinction, showed her for a moment the slight figure of an Austrian hussar; the other burned so dimly that she could scarcely any longer distinguish the outline of her own face, still less the apparition beyond. The fear of being left in utter darkness gave her courage to turn round and hurry towards the stone steps, up which she rushed, and then seated herself on a stone in the ruin beside which Doris had left her lantern.

Some minutes elapsed before she felt composed enough to descend to the boat; when she did so, Frank was seated in it with the others, like them wondering what on earth could detain Hilda so

long. He supposed she was unconscious of the lapse of time while admiring her pretty face in the mirror.

'Not exactly,' she answered, stepping into the boat, 'for I never liked my face so little as in that glass, and never wish to see it in such a light again.'

'But in seeing it you saw your future husband's face,' said Doris.

'That would be curious, for it was not Sigmund,' she replied; 'but I shall know him when I see him, at all events.'

'Good gracious, child! what do you mean?' cried her mother hastily; 'have you been terrified into the idea that you have seen an apparition?'

'I was not much frightened,' answered Hilda; 'in fact, only a little uncomfortable, until I saw the black-bearded hussar looking at me.'

'This is some trick that has been played upon you,' said her mother, starting up; 'if Emmeran had not been sitting in the boat, and Frank walking up and down within sight of us the whole time, I should have accused them of having attempted to put your courage to the test. We must search the vaults instantly.'

'I have seen enough of them for this night,'

said Hilda, seating herself beside Mina; 'but I hope you may find somebody or something that will clear up this mystery.'

'You, of course, expected to see Sigmund?' observed Mina, in a low voice.

'I expected to see my own face, and I saw it, and very corpse-like it looked; but what put an Austrian hussar into my head I cannot imagine, and one not in the least resembling any of those I used to know in papa's regiment long ago, though the uniform was precisely the same.'

'The woodranger has a black beard,' suggested her mother.

'But he has small eyes and a snub nose,' replied Hilda. 'No, dear, it was certainly *not* the woodranger, who could not know anything of our intention to come here, and would not, at all events, venture to take such a liberty.'

'Suppose he had been desired to post himself in the vaults?' suggested her mother, looking suspiciously at Emmeran and Frank. 'I wish it were so; it would be more satisfactory.'

'I believe,' said Emmeran, turning to Frank, '*we* must now insist on a search, and the sooner the better. My conscience is clear, and I don't choose to be suspected.'

Frank threw the folds of his mantle more

carefully over his shoulder, and followed him to the vaults, accompanied by Doris and her mother.

Every nook and corner were searched, but without success, and they were preparing to return to the boat, when the light suddenly fell on something shining that lay on the ground. The countess picked it up eagerly, and held it to the candle of the lantern.

'How's this?' she exclaimed; 'this ring is mine, or rather was mine, until I gave it to your stepfather, Doris. It served as guard to his wedding-ring, and well I remember his annoyance at having lost it one cold day, when he supposed he must have drawn it off his finger with his glove!'

Frank put his hand into the pocket of the jacket, and felt that a glove was in it! Should he confess, or should he not? that was the question. His aunt's agitation as she recognised and examined the ring, pointed out her initials inside, and showed how it could be contracted and enlarged, dismayed him; he feared also her displeasure for having attempted to frighten Hilda and—was silent.

From that time forward the ghost of Count Waldering had undisturbed possession of the

vaults on the island, Frank's circumstantial confession, made some years subsequently, obtaining no general credence, as it was supposed he merely invented a plausible story to satisfy his aunt and silence the ghost-seers.

How many tales of haunted places have had less foundation than the Holy-Eve prank of this young lieutenant of dragoons!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SINGULAR BETROTHAL.

THE succeeding winter was spent in Munich, Doris and her sister presented at Court, and allowed to enjoy the gaieties of the Carnival without reserve. They gained some knowledge of the world, became perfectly conscious of their personal advantages, and were as thoroughly dazzled and delighted with the then dancing, flirting, French-speaking society of Munich, as might be expected. Scarcely, however, had the recreations of Lent commenced, when a journey to Ulm became necessary, in order to take possession of the very considerable property which Hilda had inherited from a grandaunt, of whose sudden death they then heard.

This grandaunt had married, half a century previously, the only son of one of those families called 'patrician,' in the free town of Ulm. He proved the last of his race, and his arms, reversed in the usual manner under such circumstances,

may be seen to this day on a bronze monument in the beautiful cathedral of the town. His wife and sole heiress—by birth a Waldering, and possessed with the mania for name and family which seems, with the exception of Turkey, to prevail all over Europe—had not only left Hilda all she had promised her, but also everything else she possessed in the world, with the solemn injunction to fulfil her engagement to her cousin Sigmund as soon as circumstances would permit.

Sigmund, then, as a party concerned; the Director, as a man of business; and the dowager-countess, with her companion Mina Pallersberg, because they did not like being left alone,—accompanied Hilda, her mother, and Doris, to Ulm, and soon found themselves comfortably lodged in the old patrician house, near one of the gates of the town, that a few months later became the centre of important military events.

The then threatening aspect of political affairs, however, appeared to them like a distant thunder-storm; they hoped it would blow over, or at least not materially interfere with their plans and prospects. Emmeran, greatly against the wishes of his father and grandmother, had lately entered the Bavarian army. Sigmund, however, about the same time, had retired from the service, and

they would have been perfectly satisfied with him had he been a little more attentive to his cousin Hilda; while, however, daily discussing her affairs with his father, and continually proposing improvements on her property, he apparently forgot herself altogether, or seemed to consider her as merely a part of what would be his at any time he chose to appoint during the ensuing autumn.

At the rear of the Waldering house there was a small shady grass-garden, ending in a parapet wall, that had been built to confine the encroachments of the Danube; and under the trees a brick summer-house, that, according to the fashion of the time, was tastefully built to represent a Grecian temple. Here the family spent the greater part of the warm days of July and August, and here it was that Doris and her mother bravely undertook the political defence of the Austrians against the attacks of the Bavarians and French, in the persons of the Director and Sigmund—the old countess being neutral, Hilda purely Bavarian, while Mina Pallersberg was openly accused of the not uncommon meanness of siding with whichever party was most strongly represented. Here also they received frequent visits from Frank O'More, whose regiment was quartered in the neighbourhood, and laughed at his predictions of a concen-

tration of troops in the town; his advice to them to return to Westenried or Munich being scoffed at by the Director as the opinion of a subaltern officer, who could not know any of the plans under consideration at head-quarters.

The fact was, Hilda's affairs made their presence very necessary at Ulm for some time longer, and, in the idea that they could leave the town whenever they pleased, they lingered on, from day to day more interested in the efforts made to repair and fortify the works on the neighbouring heights, where in process of time, not only the garrison, but the inhabitants of the town and the peasants in its vicinity, were day and night employed in thousands. Never before, and perhaps never since, was Ulm a scene of such reckless gaiety as just then. At every hotel possessed of rooms sufficiently spacious for the purpose, there were balls without the intermission of a single night; and Frank, naturally wishing to partake of these festivities and enjoy as much as possible the society of his relations, soon managed to have himself billeted in their house. He informed them of this arrangement one afternoon in the garden, and added, laughingly, that he was glad to perceive Sigmund was the only person to whom his presence would be an annoyance.

'Rather say a matter of indifference, Frank,' observed his aunt.

'Anything but indifferent, dear aunt; can you not see that he is as jealous as ever?'

'Jealous! of whom?'

'Of me.'

'For what reason?'

'Because Doris likes me, and intends to marry me as soon as I am a colonel!'

'I really was not aware of this arrangement,' said his aunt, laughing; and looking towards her daughter, who was leaning on the parapet near them, 'You have forgotten to ask my consent, Doris.'

'I thought,' she answered, smiling, 'it would be better to wait until Frank had made up his mind whether he liked me or Hilda best; he has been rather wavering in his allegiance lately.'

'Wavering!' repeated Frank; 'no, Doris, not for a moment! I love you, and you alone; but you must allow me to *admire* Hilda, she has grown so wonderfully beautiful during the last year.'

'You cannot admire her more than I do,' said Doris, gently.

'Now, that's exactly what I knew you would say,' continued Frank; 'and, as you have no ob-

jection to my liking Hilda next best to you, we may as well tell my aunt our plans for the future.'

'*Your* plans, Frank, if you please.'

'Very well. My plan is this—you see, dear aunt, I cannot marry Doris for ever so many years; but she doesn't mind that—rather likes waiting, I believe.'

'Oh, indeed!'

'Yes; I assure you she thinks ten years hence quite time enough; and, as I have nothing but my profession, I cannot give it up, you know; would not, however, if I could, as long as there is work to be done, or a chance of obtaining a Theresian Cross!'

'Or a bullet to cool your restless ambition,' observed his aunt, quietly.

'Half-a-dozen bullets, if the reward be *the* Cross,' he answered gaily.

'And half-a-dozen it may cost you, Frank—perhaps your life!'

'Very possibly,' he answered; 'and the more so as I am more likely to use my arm than my head in the effort to obtain it.'

'Dear Frank, what *do* you mean?' asked Doris, moving nearer.

'I mean that few things are more difficult to

obtain than a Theresian Cross; and that, though there are various ways of trying for it, mine must be some act of personal courage, as I fear my hand is readier than my head when on a field of battle.'

'I think you might be satisfied with your promotion and the medal you have already received for personal bravery.'

'No, Doris; nothing will satisfy me but this Cross, of which I have as good a chance as any one, for it is given without the slightest regard to religion, rank, or any other circumstance. This highest of all military decorations will confer on me the title of Baron, and you shall then choose a new name for me.'

'Why not keep your own?' asked Doris.

'Well, so I can, if you wish it; but when one's own is not famous in any particular way, it is usual to take a name indicative of a—a—what a fellow has done, or something of that sort.'

'If that be the case,' said his aunt, 'I think we must wait until the fellow has been and done it!'

Frank laughed. 'Perhaps you are right,' he said goodhumouredly; 'and there is not much chance of my having an opportunity of distinguishing myself just now, for every one says our position

here is untenable. For my own part, I hate the idea of being shut up in a town, and would a thousand times rather meet the French at once, or retreat, if absolutely necessary, while it can be done creditably!'

'But,' observed his aunt, 'Captain Pallersberg thinks it is now too late to retire to the Tirol, and says we may very soon expect the French in our neighbourhood. The Director, however, has just informed me that, as the Walderings are Bavarians, we have personally nothing to fear.'

'I hope, however,' began Frank, 'that you and Doris are not going to side with the French?'

'By no means, Frank; but women are privileged cowards, you know, and in case of the worst we cannot be expected openly to proclaim ourselves champions for Austria.'

'I will,' said Doris; 'at least whenever I can do so without making myself ridiculous.'

'That's right,' cried Frank, 'and I can assure you that, with the exception of Napoleon himself, there is scarcely a Frenchman who will think it necessary to take umbrage at your calling yourself an enemy.'

At this moment Hilda entered the garden and came towards them, exclaiming, 'I thought, Frank, you were obliged to remain some days longer at

Forsteck about the horses required for your regiment?'

'Well, so I am, and I only came here to-day to report progress. A corporal and five men are with me in your gardener's old tower; we have turned his cow out to graze, and taken possession of her quarters for our horses.'

'I wonder you did not prefer Forsteck, for yourself, at least?'

'Of course I should, if you were all staying there; but what should I do alone in those great, grand rooms? The gardener's tower, with its two pigeon-holes on each storey, suits me famously, as I have my men above and my horses below me at night.'

'And concerning the aloe at Elchingen, Frank, did you make inquiries about it?'

'All right! it is blowing magnificently. They have placed it in a sort of half-ruined chapel, near the monastery, and crowds of people from Ulm come daily to see it and wander afterwards to the inn, where roast chickens are still to be had by those who have money to pay for them!'

'Now, mama,' said Hilda, 'suppose we were to make an excursion to-morrow to see this blossoming aloe. You know aloes only blow once in a hundred years, and grandmama and Mina wish to

see it; and you could all go in the carriage, and Doris and I might ride with Sigmund, and Frank could join us for an hour or two at Elchingen, and——'

'And—and—and,' said her mother, laughing; 'you need not be so very eager, as I have not the least intention of opposing your plan.'

'Then, Frank,' said Hilda, 'you must promise to join us.'

'Of course, if those tiresome peasants of yours do not detain me. Have you any commands for the gardener at Forsteck?'

'Some flowers; but you will be sure to forget to bring them to me.'

'If I do, I promise to return to Forsteck for them, and give you leave to talk of my negligence for years to come!'

'I only talk of your neglect of *me*, Frank; for if it were Doris who wished for flowers, you would bring them as certainly as I stand here, notwithstanding your habitual carelessness.'

'And if I forgot them,' he answered, 'she would not think it worth speaking of.'

'Perhaps so; but as I am not Doris, I intend to exact the attention due to me.'

'And, Doris,' he rejoined gaily, 'has given me leave to pay you as much as you desire.'

'I know she has; she told me she had no right to object.'

'That is not exactly the state of the case now,' said Frank, with heightened colour, 'for we have just entered into an engagement for ten years.'

'Is this true?' asked Sigmund—advancing from the gate of the yard into the garden and walking straight towards Doris—'Is this true, or is it one of your cousin's intolerably perplexing jests?'

'I declare I scarcely know,' she answered, smiling; 'but if Frank chooses to consider himself engaged, I have no objection, as he is satisfied to postpone the discussion of the matter for such a length of time!'

'Oh! is that all?' said Sigmund, turning towards the river; and then adding ironically in a low voice, 'and this he calls an engagement!'

'This is not all,' cried Frank, roused to a vague feeling of jealousy, and a good deal chafed at Doris's too apparent self-possession and caution; 'this is not all; and I now demand a straightforward serious answer to——'

'Now, Frank, don't get into a passion for nothing,' expostulated Doris.

'I am not in a passion,' he answered, with quivering lips, 'I am only in earnest, and very earnest, for once in my life! Doris, darling,' he

added, stretching forward both his hands, 'is it, or is it not to be?'

And, without a moment's hesitation, Doris placed her hands in his and answered, 'As you will, Frank; I only wished to leave you at liberty, because I doubted your constancy bearing the test of time, as I am quite sure mine will.'

'Doris, don't say that.'

'I would not if you had not compelled me,' she replied; 'and now go and be satisfied with having forced me to make a confession before witnesses, with which you might either have dispensed altogether or asked for less imperiously and publicly!'

Frank blushed as deeply at this reprimand as Doris herself had done while giving it; and murmuring something about being a hot-tempered fool and not worthy of her, he left the garden.

'A truly singular betrothal!' observed Sigmund, filiping some loose stones from the wall into the river.

'Doris,' said her mother, gravely, 'I trust you have not acted from impulse on this occasion, and overseen the importance of your promise.'

'No, mama, not at all; Frank and I have been intimate from infancy, and learned almost to like each other's faults. An engagement may serve to

steady him, and I should have awaited his decision at all events.'

'You are quite right, Doris,' said Hilda, warmly, 'for he certainly is the dearest, bravest, handsomest——'

'You had better not go on,' cried her mother, laughing, 'or Sigmund will be jealous.'

'Not the least danger,' he observed, without looking up; 'Hilda makes no secret of her preference for Frank, and I feel and know as well as she does that our marriage is but the fulfilment of a family compact. Fortunately our long intimacy and engagement has taught us, if not to like, at least to tolerate each other's faults, so perhaps, after all,' he added, shrugging his shoulders, 'our chance of happiness is as good as Frank's and Doris's.'

'I hope so,' said his aunt, gravely, as she turned from them to follow Doris, who was walking towards the house.

'Yet there is a great difference——' began Hilda, hesitatingly.

'Perhaps so, if well considered,' he replied.

'Let us consider well while there is time, Sigmund,' she said, leaning on the wall beside him. 'I fear, in fact, I am sure, you are not at all attached to me, as Frank is to Doris. You merely wish

with my fortune to give the Walderings their former position in the world?'

'And you,' he replied, calmly, 'wish merely to share that position, and preserve your name and rank.'

'My father's wishes have weighed with me far more than you suppose,' said Hilda.

'Sufficiently to stifle your love and admiration for the "dearest, bravest, handsomest" of cousins?' he asked, ironically.

'No,' said Hilda, courageously, though blushing intensely; 'but Frank has never thought of me, not more than Doris of you! There is no cause of jealousy for either of us, so we may put that out of the question, and only consider if it would not be better to break off an engagement that is becoming worse than irksome to us both?'

'You amaze me, Hilda, for just at this moment my engagement to you is less irksome than it has been for years, and yours to me ought to be the same.'

'I do not understand——'

'Then I will speak as plainly as yourself: as long as Doris and Frank were free we might have entertained hopes, and——'

'No, Sigmund, Frank has openly professed his attachment to Doris ever since I knew him. Had

not this been the case, I should never have consented to our betrothal before we left Munich. It is, however, not yet too late to make you free.' Here she drew from her finger the ring he had given her when they had been affianced; but Sigmund only took it for a moment in his hand in order to replace it on hers, while vehemently declining the proffered freedom.

As they soon after left the garden, the door of the temple-formed summer-house was hastily opened, and Mina Pallersberg descended the steps carrying a large piece of tapestry-work, in which a nice observer might have discovered that the chief implement of industry, a needle, had been forgotten. Flushed and agitated, her first impulse was to follow the retreating figures. Even Sigmund's name was uttered in a low panting voice, but she suddenly turned round, retraced her steps to her former place of retreat, and was there found an hour afterwards, to all appearance working diligently, by a servant who came to inform her that the French papers had arrived, and the dowager countess greatly wished to have them read to her.

CHAPTER XIV.

A RIDE IN SEARCH OF A BOUQUET.

THE Walderings spent the next day at Elchingen, and, after an early dinner, visited the aloe, which is still well remembered by many of the then inhabitants of Ulm. It was a magnificent plant; and, with a couple of others less advanced in years, completely filled the chapel in which it had been placed. Both Doris and Hilda received from the gardener one of the pendant blossoms that grew thickly on the numerous long stalks; the others, less favoured, purchased small phials of the sap, which the Director immediately surmised to be honey and water, as no plant could have furnished Ulm with such a quantity of sweet juice and be still in so flourishing a condition.

'For so grand a plant the flower is insignificant,' observed Doris; 'but I am glad I have seen it.'

'Many flowers, too, are prettier,' said Hilda, examining hers attentively. 'And,' she added,

suddenly raising her head and turning to Frank, 'and, now that I think of it, where is the bouquet you were to bring me for the ball to-night? Forgotten, of course, as I predicted!'

'No, and yes,' answered Frank, laughing. 'The flowers were ordered by me yesterday evening, and brought this morning by the gardener. I placed them with the greatest care in water to keep them fresh, then went to examine a score of horses—received a despatch from headquarters ordering me to conclude my business as soon as possible, as there was no longer a doubt that the French were approaching our neighbourhood—mounted my horse without returning to my room, and so the flowers were forgotten.'

'Don't suppose I expected you to remember them,' said Hilda, turning from him; while Frank, perceiving she was offended, followed, and, to obtain pardon, completely devoted himself to her for the remainder of the afternoon. He was not only forgiven, but soon reinstated in her good graces; and when he was obliged to return to Forsteck, she accompanied him to the yard to look at his new horse—told him she would dance with him if he could manage to come to the ball, and 'she believed she would

give him another trial: he might bring the bouquet with him!'

'I think,' said Mina Pallersberg, who had not left Hilda's side during the afternoon,—'I think it would be better if we all went home by Forsteck; it is very little out of the way, and you might ride on before the rest and see if your bouquet be really on Captain O'More's table, as he asserts.'

'Of that there is no doubt whatever,' answered Hilda quickly; 'but I should like the ride with Frank, and have a great mind to run back and ask mama and grandmama's leave.'

'Ah, bah!' cried Mina; 'if you ask them, they will make all sorts of difficulties! Ride on before, and they will follow, you may depend upon it. Shall I say you will meet them at the cross roads?—or that they will find you at home before them? You can easily manage one or the other.'

'Very easily,' said Hilda, already wavering. 'Frank, what do you say?'

'Don't ask me,' he replied, 'as of course I should like to have you with me anywhere, but quite especially on that tiresome, long, straight road.'

'Then I don't see why I should not go.'

'Nor I,' he replied, 'unless the fear of displeasing Sigmund deter you.'

'But,' suggested Mina, 'I can tell Sigmund you hoped he would follow you.'

'Yes, dear, do; and with Doris for a companion he will enjoy himself supremely.'

Mina forced a smile.

'I hope we shan't get a blowing-up for this frolic,' said Frank, as Hilda's horse was led from the stable.

'From whom?' asked Mina. 'Have you not told me repeatedly that cousins might go anywhere together?'

'Oh well, so they can in England,' he answered; 'but people here are so ridiculously prudish that one never knows what one may do.'

'It seems Captain O'More fears Sigmund's displeasure more than you do, Hilda,' said Mina ironically.

Frank raised his cousin to her saddle, and half smiled.

'Or,' she continued,—'or is it Dora's disapprobation that he dreads?'

This had more effect. Frank's colour mounted to his temples.

Hilda laid her hand on the mane of his horse

as he was about to mount, and said earnestly, 'Would you hesitate to take Doris with you to Forsteck?'

'Not for a moment,' he answered, vaulting into his saddle.

'And she would go with you?'

'Undoubtedly;—that is, if she felt inclined. And why not? We have taken longer rides together both at Garvagh and Westenried.'

Hilda smiled, nodded to Mina, and let her horse bound towards the gate of the yard that a servant held open, and in a few seconds she and her cousin were out of sight.

It was singular that Mina made no mention of Hilda's desire that her sister and Sigmund should follow her, when informing the Walderings of the excursion in search of a bouquet.

'I never heard of anything so foolish and giddy!' cried the old countess, fanning herself vehemently, though the large room in which they were sitting was anything rather than warm. 'Really quite improper, and enough to irritate Sigmund beyond measure.'

'Oh, not at all,' he said, shrugging his shoulders; 'I am really so accustomed to Hilda's open preference of Frank O'More, that I now

scarcely perceive the most marked demonstration of devotion on her part. If Doris be satisfied with Frank——'

'I see no reason for displeasure,' interposed Doris; 'why should they not make a short excursion to obtain a bouquet for this evening's ball?'

'For every possible reason,' said the Director severely. 'Had you all gone together, and openly, even without consulting us, it would have been merely a pardonable *escapade;* but a—a—an elopement of this kind is highly reprehensible! You agree with me, I am sure?' he said, turning to his sister-in-law.

'I cannot attach much importance to their riding home by Forsteck instead of returning with us,' she answered quietly; 'excepting perhaps, that as the evening is cold and damp, a prolonged ride may give Hilda a cold.'

'And I,' said Doris, 'have often, very often, been out longer and later with Frank, and nobody called it an elopement, or seemed to think it at all extraordinary.'

'Excuse me,' said the Director, 'but I can assure you I very often felt inclined to express my disapprobation at Westenried, and was silent

only because I supposed it a peculiarity of English-women to—to—'

'To make use of their cousins?' interposed Doris, laughing. 'That is actually the case; and only imagine my having had seven such cousins as Frank to obey my orders for so many years at Garvagh! It was enough to make a tyrant of me for life; and would, perhaps, had I not come to Westenried and seen Sigmund exact implicit obedience from Hilda on all occasions. It is only lately that she has ventured sometimes in trifles to dispute his authority, though I think she likes having her own way even better than I do!'

'I must say,' observed the Director, 'that the last winter spent in Munich has not improved her.'

'Nor me, perhaps?' asked Doris.

'Nor you,' he answered gravely; 'you have both become too conscious of your personal advantages, and in a manner emancipated yourselves from all control.'

'My poor mother,' cried Doris, smiling, 'what a pair of worthless daughters you have got!'

'I am quite satisfied with you both,' answered her mother, rising, 'though I begin to wish that Hilda had at least gone to Forsteck an hour or—

two earlier; she will have to ride hard to reach home before dark.'

In the mean time Frank and Hilda gave themselves no sort of concern about the waning daylight; they rode on at a hard trot, talking and laughing merrily, so that the long straight road was passed over unobserved, and they were surprised when they found themselves close to the small tower at the end of the extensive orchard of Forsteck, where Frank had spent the last fortnight. At the door, which was slightly ajar, a dragoon stood waiting, or rather peering out, in expectation of the arrival of his captain.

'All ready for a return to Ulm?' asked Frank as he was about to follow Hilda up the narrow winding staircase.

'Captain, a word, if you please.' said the man, opening his eyes so wide, and looking towards Hilda with such an expression of amazement and dismay that Frank with difficulty repressed a smile.

'You and the men can remain here to-night,' he said, turning back for a moment; 'but don't forget to offer five guineas more for the bay mare at the mill before you leave in the morning; and —a—Huber—what do you mean by bringing the

horses in here? We are going to mount again directly.'

'The road to Ulm will not be safe for the Countess Hilda, Captain, as there is a detachment of French reconnoitring in the neighbourhood.'

'Confound them!' cried Frank. 'Why didn't they come in the morning when we were alone? How strong are they?'

'Six-and-thirty light horse and an officer.'

'We have munition,' murmured Frank, 'and some days' provision too. If I only had Hilda safely in Ulm! What *am* I to do with her?'

He had not time to consider; for, while one of the horses still stood in the doorway, they heard the approach of cavalry, and before they had time to close the door several men had dismounted and rushed tumultuously into the tower.*

Frank sprang up the stairs into his room, where Hilda was calmly arranging her bouquet—seized his pistols, took down a musket from the wall, and, telling her hastily neither to look out of the window nor open the door if she heard a noise, he returned to the staircase in time to assist the corporal, who was nearly overpowered by numbers. Three times he fired with such astonishing rapidity,

* Fact.

and so effectually wounded his adversaries, that they threw down their arms and began a hasty retreat. Some of his men, who had been in the upper story, now hastened down the stairs; others hurried from the stable, and the door was soon effectually barricaded.

Hilda had not remained so passive as Frank had expected; she stood at the door of the room and now exclaimed, 'Frank! they have found the gardener's ladder, and placed it against the staircase window.'

Before he could reach it, the head of an adventurous youth became apparent through the small round panes of glass.

'Shoot him, captain,' cried the corporal, grimly.

'I'd rather not,' said Frank; but he suddenly threw open the window, seized the ends of the ladder, and, in spite of the struggling Frenchman, dashed both with all his force to the ground.

'Now let us look at the windows in my rooms —they can be reached in the same way as this, and we have the two doors to defend also. Huber, post a man at each, and one of you go up stairs to look out. Hilda, can you load a gun?'

'No, Frank, but I can learn.'

'That's a dear girl, I knew you would make

yourself useful; I wish you were at home, though, with all my soul, but that can't be managed now.'

And they ran up the stairs together.

'Now look here, Hilda, while I load these pistols. I say, Huber, what's that noise below stairs?'

'An attack on the stable-door, captain,' shouted the corporal.

Frank loaded, then made a bound to the window near him, and fired.

'Give me the other pistol, Hilda.'

She obeyed, and a horrible yell from below, mixed with shouts and imprecations, followed the second shot.

'They're going at last,' he said, slowly retreating into the room; but even while he spoke the carbines of the whole troop were discharged in the direction of the window. A couple of bullets struck the ceiling, and sent down a shower of mortar; and while Frank threw his arms round Hilda to shield her, another swept the unlucky bouquet from the table beside him, shivering the glass and dispersing fragments of flowers in all directions.

'They are retreating,' shouted the man from the upper story—'retreating with five wounded.'

'In what direction?' asked Frank.

'Ulm.'

'They must have mounted the hay-cart to fire that last volley,' cried Frank, turning towards the window.

'Oh, Frank, dear Frank, don't stand at the window again; it is much better to let them go away quietly.'

'And,' he said, turning round,—'and better for you to go to the top of the tower, in case they should return here. One of those bullets might have killed you, Hilda!'

'Or you,' she answered, quickly, 'especially the one that hit the bouquet. I suppose,' she added anxiously, 'I suppose we must now wait until it is dark before we return home?'

'Longer than that, Hilda,' he answered, beginning to reload his pistols.

'I don't mind waiting,' she observed, 'or riding at midnight, if necessary; but you know, Frank, how dreadfully uneasy mama will be, and I would run any risk rather than alarm her.'

'The risk of being taken prisoner by the French?'

'Yes. My uncle says we have nothing to fear. I am a Bavarian, you know.'

'And what am I?' asked Frank, laughing.

'You think, then,' she asked, 'there might be actual personal danger for you if taken prisoner?'

'Rather beforehand,' he answered, 'as I should certainly fight hard for my liberty. But it was not our lives those men wanted just now, Hilda; it was prisoners,—if possible an officer who could give them information: you understand?'

'I believe I do; but on account of my mother and Doris, we must at least send the gardener to Ulm.'

'Of course, if he come here; but I cannot risk or spare a man to look for him, dear Hilda, as we are barely enough to defend the place, and may be attacked again before morning. Don't, however, make yourself unhappy; I am sure Pallersberg will miss us at the ball to-night, and send or come to relieve us.'

'And I am sure mama will send for him at once,' said Hilda.

'Most probably,' he answered, closing the outside window-shutters carefully, and afterwards the window itself. 'I should think,' he continued, 'she will scarcely hesitate in a case of this kind.'

'In any case, Frank; for there is no one of whom she thinks so highly as Captain Pallersberg!'

They were just then in complete darkness, but Frank was striking a light with flints and the other materials then necessary for the now so simple operation, and when his candle was lighted he held it low for the purpose of making the staircase visible, up which he led the way, while saying, 'You will be much safer in the attic, Hilda, and as soon as I have examined the doors and windows, and given some directions, I shall come up and sit with you.'

The tower, which was the last remnant of what had once been a castle, and was only separated by extensive gardens and an orchard from the new residence, had very thick, rough walls, a narrow stone staircase lighted by extremely small windows, two rooms on each story, and attics almost quite unfurnished, in order to have place enough for seeds, bulbs, flower-pots, and gardening implements.

'We'll carry up some things to make you comfortable by-and-bye,' said Frank, pushing all the carefully-sorted seeds from the deal table, and drawing a stool towards her; and after all it will not be worse here than in the vaults of the Chapel-island, where you were obliged to take shelter from your friends, the French, some years ago!'

'They are neither friends nor enemies just now, Frank. We intend to be neutral, because our Crown Prince Louis is still in Paris!'

'Don't imagine,' rejoined Frank, 'that Napoleon will allow you to be neutral, no matter how much you may wish it—say allies, and you will be nearer the mark.'

'Well,' she said, 'and why not? My uncle says the Austrians have no right to compel us to join them, or force us to commence a new war after all we have suffered.'

'But I tell you,' said Frank, seating himself astride on a plank supported by blocks of wood, 'I tell you you are too weak to defend yourselves and preserve your neutrality, and we have promised to guarantee the inviolability of all your possessions at the conclusion of the war!'

"Oh, indeed? You will allow us to retain what we already possess! But *we* don't choose to have the law laid down to us in that way, I can tell you!"

'Don't you?' cried Frank. 'I suspect you'll learn to find the commands of a French Emperor harder than were ever those of a German.'

'I don't think we shall,' retorted Hilda, delighted to find herself talking like her uncle, and able to irritate her cousin. 'Your Emperor re-

quired us to give up all independence, and put our army altogether under his orders.'

'Of course,' said Frank, 'and Napoleon will do the same.'

'My uncle says——'

'I don't want to hear what your uncle says,' cried Frank, starting up so energetically that the wooden supporters of his plank rolled to the other end of the room. 'Why can't you give your opinion as Doris does, instead of making a parrot of yourself, and repeating other people's words? Have you no ideas of your own, Hilda?'

'Plenty,' she replied, her voice trembling with anger and mortification; 'more than you will like to hear, perhaps. Taking you as a sample of an Austrian officer, one can quite understand a refusal to serve under them, and I don't require to learn from my uncle what everybody knows—that you are likely to be defeated in this war! Prussia is neutral, the Russians ever so far away, and the French are here, and commanded by Napoleon, whose name is an army in itself!'

'I need not ask what your hopes and wishes are,' said Frank, biting his lip, 'but I trust I shall live to hear you speak differently.'

'Of what importance are the words of a parrot?' she asked ironically.

'Hilda, I am very sorry. I really did not mean——'

'You meant what you said, and were so rude that I should be very glad if you would go away, and not annoy me with your company until you come to take me home.'

'You shall be implicitly obeyed. I have no wish to force my society on you or any one,' said Frank, leaving the room in high dudgeon.

Before he was half-way down the stairs he felt the absurdity of quarrelling with his youthful cousin because she happened to have adopted the political opinions of her uncle, and the man to whom she was about to be united in the course of a few weeks. He turned round, and with hasty steps remounted to the door of her room, but found it bolted from within, and no entreaties on his part could induce her to open it, or even reply to his apologies.

The fact was Hilda did not choose him to see that she had indulged in a hearty fit of crying, which was renewed as he again began to descend the stone steps. 'I—knew—he did not care for me,' she sobbed; 'but I—did—not—think he supposed me a mere repeater of other people's words—an idiot! I will show him that I have ideas—and opinions—and—and—a will of my

own, too! Oh, how I wish I had not come here with him? What will mama say? and my uncle? And Sigmund, who is so jealous and suspicious, will of course think, and perhaps say, that I wanted to have a *tête-à-tête* ride with Frank! And even Frank himself may imagine—but no—he only called it a frolic, and it would have been nothing else but for these odious French soldiers, who are just now really my enemies, though I have been foolish enough to quarrel with Frank about them!'

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT PEOPLE SAID.

MEANTIME the Walderings drove homewards, at first quickly enough, then obliged to pass slowly different detachments of cavalry, and finally they were detained for more than an hour at the gate of the town by the entrance of troops into it. During their absence their house had assumed the appearance of a barrack: the court, offices, corridors, and apartments were filled with soldiers. In the drawing-room a swarm of officers had assembled, talking loudly and gesticulating eagerly; and when Sigmund and his father advanced into the midst of them, they were at once informed that twenty thousand men were that night to be quartered in Ulm, and no householders could be spared the infliction of additional soldiers being billeted on tehm. They would, however, answer for the good conduct of their men, and that nothing in or about the house should be injured.

'May I ask,' said the Director, looking round the disordered room, where caps and hats and swords and sabres lay in heaps, and even Doris's harp had been turned into a cloak-stand, 'may I ask the cause of this sudden influx of military?'

The answer was more intelligible to Sigmund than to his father, who, however, understood that some dislocation of troops had become necessary in consequence of the approach of Ney and Soult at one side and Napoleon himself at the other; while Doris and her mother, still lingering near the door, heard with dismay that detachments of cavalry had been seen that afternoon reconnoitring in the neighbourhood of Elchingen.

'We have just come from Elchingen, and have heard nothing of the kind,' observed the Countess Waldering.

'Nevertheless,' answered one of the officers, 'it is reported that Ney is in that direction; but,' he added, on perceiving her alarm, 'but the information may not be correct.'

'Let us send for Captain Pallersberg,' she said anxiously.

'Pallersberg is not in Ulm just now,' answered another officer, coming forward; 'but if you will

tell me the cause of your uneasiness perhaps I can be of use.'

She related that her daughter had made an excursion to Forsteck for some flowers, and she feared she might find it difficult to return home.

'Forsteck!' he repeated; 'that is where O'More has been for the last ten days collecting horses, and he told me yesterday he intended to return this evening. Mademoiselle will meet him there, and could not have a better escort.'

'Of course, she will have his escort,' said the Director; 'but he may be overpowered by numbers.'

'Then,' replied the officer, smiling, 'we must hope that he will defend himself in the old tower until we can send troops to raise the siege.'

'This is no jesting matter,' said the Director testily; 'O'More is so reckless that he might blow up the tower if unable to defend it, or make some wild sally that might cost my niece her life!'

'Oh, mother!' cried Doris, greatly agitated, 'let us go to Forsteck and save her, or share her fate!'

'Not for the universe!' cried Sigmund, suddenly roused from a state of apathy that had

appeared unaccountable to them all excepting, perhaps, Mina Pallersberg, whose eyes had been fixed intently on him alone. 'Why?' he continued, 'why should you incur danger for Hilda's wilful and wild conduct? And of what use could you be? I will go myself to Forsteck, and defend her from the consequences of an indiscretion that I shall scarcely be able to pardon.'

'Sigmund!' cried Doris, as he passed her, 'Sigmund! do not judge Hilda too harshly. I am convinced she expected—hoped we should follow her. Is it not so, Mina?'

'Very probably,' she answered coldly.

'No, Doris!' he said, bending down towards her, and whispering eagerly, 'no! she wished to be with Frank, and will gladly brave the danger if shared with him; and I—I—interfere now wholly on your account, for it is torture to me to see you suffer a moment's uneasiness!'

Doris drew back, equally surprised and shocked at his vehemence, while his grandmother, tapping him on the shoulder with her fan, observed, 'Go, *mein Schatz*, you are the best emissary that can be employed on this occasion. Should you fall into the hands of the French, there is no danger either for you or your *fiancée*, and your presence will save her from all the scandalous reports and

town talk to which her *étourderie* would give rise should she be unable to return home before her absence is observed.'

Sigmund shook off the approval-tapping fan, not, perhaps, quite pleased to have his ride to Forsteck placed in so unhazardous a light, and left the room without answering.

The others followed, and when the door had closed on them the officers looked at each other meaningly, and then made some knowing grimaces.

'He has carried off the heiress, by Jove!' exclaimed one.

'Always thought he'd do it!' said another.

'It's the way of these Irishmen,' observed a third, 'and is a famous stepping-stone to promotion. O'More's always in luck, at all events—continually getting into scrapes that would ruin other fellows, but which invariably turn out to his advantage. Now, were one of us at Forsteck, we might be overpowered, taken prisoner, and perhaps on our way to France before any one here would think it necessary to make an effort to save us; but O'More goes off with a young heiress, and the whole town and garrison will be in alarm a few hours hence!'

'Alarm, or not,' said an elderly officer, who

was buckling on his sword preparatory to leaving the room, 'it will be some days before we shall have time to think of him. The Archduke Ferdinand is expected, the movement of the troops must be completed, and then perhaps a retreat into Tirol taken into consideration.'

'The Marshal will not listen to the word "retreat," though our forces do not amount to the half of the French,' observed a youthful lieutenant. 'He says the Russians must be here before long, and we can hold out until they come.'

'Or,' said the other, striding towards the door, 'or until the town is bombarded.'

That 5th of October was an intranquil night in Ulm, though to the honour of the Imperialists it must be observed that scarcely any European army could have been suddenly quartered in like numbers on the inhabitants of a town of such limited dimensions without giving cause for bitter complaints. So exemplary, however, was their conduct that not one serious transgression is on record.

At the most brilliant and most crowded of the balls that evening, the Walderings' absence was observed, and the family having hitherto occupied a prominent position on such occasions, Hilda's unfortunate ride, with many additions,

soon became the chief topic of conversation. Some laughed, and talked of *étourderie;* others looked sagacious, and suggested that as the young countess had shown plainly enough how greatly she preferred Captain O'More to Count Sigmund, the ride might have been a bold stroke to break off her engagement to one cousin in order to be at liberty to marry the other. It was singular that none seemed to think the near relationship of Frank and Hilda sufficient to render their being prisoners together for a few days a mere matter of annoyance and probable personal danger; though in point of fact the connexion is considered nearer in the Roman Catholic states of Germany than in England, as is made evident by a dispensation from the Pope being absolutely necessary for the marriage of such relations.

Doris and her mother found a melancholy consolation during the night in thinking that Sigmund was with Hilda, and that they could return home together the next morning without much danger, even supposing the French in the immediate neighbourhood; but when neither they nor any tidings reached home during the early part of the day, maternal anxiety overcame all other considerations, and refusing steadily Doris's entreaties to be allowed to accompany her, the

countess drove off alone to Forsteck, while the Director went to head-quarters to seek whatever assistance could be procured. The former was met and sent back by a French patrol long before she had reached her destination; the latter was informed that an order had already been given for some squadrons of cuirassiers to clear the country in the direction of Elchingen. This may have been done; but the prisoners in the Forsteck tower were not released until Captain Pallersberg returned to Ulm at the end of the week, and was given permission to reconnoitre in the neighbourhood. A detachment of Frank's own regiment risked a détour to the tower, and brought him and his cousin back in a sort of triumph after a successful skirmish with some French horse, in which it was declared that Hilda had behaved with astonishing heroism, and that having made every evolution with perfect precision she had not embarrassed them in the least.

Her explanation that her horse had learned to stand fire and knew his duty was not allowed to detract from her merit, and like a general surrounded by a numerous staff she galloped through the streets to her home. There she raised her

hand, in playful military salute, to her beaver hat, from which the long feather had actually been shot away an hour previously, and then disappeared under the archway, to spring to the ground and be clasped in the arms of her mother and sister, whose pale anxious faces formed a strong contrast to her sparkling eyes and wild state of excitement.

'Oh, my dear mother!' she exclaimed, as they mounted the stairs together, 'I have been in a state of despair—'

'I can easily imagine it, my poor child,' said her mother, interrupting her with a caress; 'what apprehension and anxiety you must have endured during the last six days!'

'On your account and Doris's, dear mama—more than I can express.'

'It must have been a great relief to your mind when Sigmund joined you,' continued her mother, leading the way to the drawing-room; 'we only heard from him to-day to say he would return this evening. Why is he not with you?'

'He did not come to us at all, mama; though Frank suspects he might have done so had he wished it.'

'What do you mean, dear Hilda?'

'Sigmund was intercepted on his way to us, and made prisoner by a Captain d'Esterre, who took him to Gundelfingen.'

'How did you hear that?'

'This Captain d'Esterre allowed him to send a peasant with a note to desire me to keep Frank quiet, as there were French patrols between us and Ulm.'

'Mama,' said Doris, 'that French captain is Louis d'Esterre, I am quite sure.'

'Very probably; but go on, Hilda. Why did you not send the gardener here?'

'Of course I did, and he attempted to get to Ulm several times with a letter from me hid in baskets of fruit and vegetables, but was always found out and sent back again. Frank suspects that Sigmund was at the bottom of it all!'

'In what way?'

'He says he must have been perfectly explicit with this Captain d'Esterre, who undoubtedly is the French emigrant that lived so long at Garvagh, otherwise we should certainly have been attacked more frequently and forcibly. Frank said from the first they only wanted a prisoner who could give them military information, and he is sure that Sigmund told all that was necessary.

Frank and I had a desperate quarrel about politics, but I could not attempt to defend Sigmund, it is so abominable his telling about the incompleteness of the works round Ulm, and Marshal Mack's indecision concerning a retreat into Tirol!'

'Frank is by no means certain that Sigmund has done so,' observed her mother.

'He says there can be little doubt of it; otherwise, this D'Esterre would have considered it his duty to turn back and take us prisoners—disagreeable as it would have been to him. He thinks also that Sigmund could have obtained permission to return to Ulm had he desired it, and ought, at all events, to have made an effort to come for *me*, instead of writing hypocritical letters deploring my equivocal position, and fearing that people might put a false construction on what he could assure me he still tried to consider mere *étourderie* on my part! Did you ever hear anything so absurd? Frank told me not to make myself unhappy, for that people had other things to think and talk about just now.'

Perceiving her mother and sister look very grave, Hilda added, 'And you think so too, mama?'

'I wish I could—but it is not so, Hilda; you have been talked of, and judged most unkindly.'

'In what way?—what could they say?'

The Director, who had been standing unperceived in the doorway of an adjoining room, answered severely, 'They said you preferred Frank to Sigmund, and had eloped with him *à l'Anglaise!*'

Hilda seemed overwhelmed with consternation at these words. Pale and trembling, she caught the back of the nearest chair, and gasped: 'I—could not—foresee—that I—that we—should be imprisoned. He—I—we never thought——'

'Very likely not,' said her uncle; 'but other people view this affair most unfavourably, and I should scarcely be surprised if, after so flagrant a breach of decorum, Sigmund should no longer think himself bound to fulfil his engagement to you.'

'I shall not ask him,' replied Hilda, haughtily; 'he might have told you that I proposed breaking it off the day before we went to Elchingen.'

'Your position is now quite different from what it was then,' replied her uncle; 'and you will have reason to be grateful to Sigmund if he can

be induced to save you from the only alternative that now remains to silence slander and preserve your reputation.'

'And what is the alternative?' she asked quickly. 'For, though Sigmund's opinion is henceforward a matter of indifference to me, I am ready to do anything to prove myself blameless in the eyes of others.'

'That is no longer possible,' said her uncle; 'and therefore I advise you to appeal to Sigmund's generosity, and——'

'Anything rather than that,' cried Hilda, vehemently.

'Then,' said the Director, 'you have but to explain the state of the case to your cousin Frank, who will see at once that he cannot do otherwise than—propose to—marry you himself!'

'No, no, no!—never, never!' she cried passionately; and then, rushing forwards, she threw herself on her knees beside her sister, and burst into tears.

The Director left the room, and a long and painful pause ensued, during which Hilda's slight figure shook with convulsive sobs, and was only prevented from falling prostrate on the ground by her sister's supporting arm.

'That speech about Sigmund was quite unnecessary,' said Doris, addressing her mother.

'I don't care about it,' interposed Hilda, raising her head with evident effort; 'for I had resolved, at all events, to break off my engagement with him. I never liked, and now almost hate him. Without having made an effort to save me from the consequences of my thoughtlessness, he will now condemn and be the first to injure me in the eyes of the world, though he knows as well as you do that under Frank's protection I was as safe—far safer—than in his; for Frank would have perilled his life to save mine. Oh! mother, speak to us, but do not say that Doris and Frank must be sacrificed to save me from ignominy!'

'Ignominy is too strong a word,' said her mother, coming towards her; 'but I greatly fear that all the distressing trials to which a blighted reputation is liable will be your portion, my poor child! if Sigmund cannot be induced by his father to fulfil his engagement to you.'

'Do not name him,' cried Hilda, waving her hand impatiently, with an expression of strong aversion; 'had I the power now, I would refuse him ten thousand thousand times! Has he not told me, without an attempt at reserve, that he

cannot love me as he does Doris? and did he not listen with perfect indifference to my confession that——' Here she stopped suddenly, clasped her hands above her head, and hid her face on her sister's knee.

And Doris's pale features became perfectly white, while her eyes sought her mother's in expressive interrogation. A compression of the lips and two or three sorrowful inclinations of the head denoted immediately afterwards that she had received a confirmation of long-entertained suspicions, and then, bending down, she whispered, 'You told him, dear—that you loved Frank?'

Hilda's fingers seemed to clasp tighter, but she did not move or make an attempt to answer.

During the pause that ensued they became aware of Sigmund's arrival by hearing him speak to a servant in the ante-room.

'I cannot let him see me in this state,' cried Hilda, rising hastily from her kneeling position, and pushing her dishevelled hair from her face. 'It will be better to write than to speak to him; for I might say more than is necessary, and he might answer what I never could forgive or forget.'

When Sigmund opened the door, he saw the

three retreating figures in an adjoining room; but, though he spoke, not one of them stopped, answered, or even looked round as if conscious of his presence.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT DORIS DID.

BEFORE Frank again saw his aunt and cousins, he had become unpleasantly acquainted with the calumnies to which Hilda's detention in the tower at Forsteck had given rise. Her position, as sole heiress to one of the oldest patrician families of Ulm, had been sufficiently conspicuous to make her words and actions the subject of discussion to the inhabitants of the town and its environs, in a manner of which neither she nor her nearest relations had had the slightest idea; so that her uncle's words were, in fact, but an echo of the rumours that had at first been whispered and then loudly and unreservedly repeated during her absence. If the officers of the garrison of Ulm thought her in the right to prefer their daring handsome comrade to the not very popular Count Waldering, the mode of expressing this opinion was highly offensive to Frank, who considered Hilda's name compromised by their jests and insinuations: angry

words had ensued, satisfaction had been demanded and given with a promptitude peculiar to those times. Commanding officers had business more important than making minute inquiries concerning the wounds of men whose lives were daily exposed to danger by the immediate vicinity of the enemy, so that Frank, quite unmolested, defended the fame of his cousin at the point of his sword no less than four times in one week, while a duel with pistols had only been frustrated by a cannon-ball having killed his adversary a few hours before the time appointed for the meeting.

It would be difficult to describe the recklessness with regard to human life then prevalent; but Captain Pallersberg at length thought it his duty to interfere in the most effectual manner by informing the Walderings without reserve of all that had occurred.

Now Frank's refusal to resign Doris, and his unceremonious manner of declining to discuss 'the elopement,'—as both the Director and Sigmund persisted in calling the unlucky sojourn at Forsteck—had led to scenes that had ended in his first leaving the house and then abstaining altogether from even visiting there. Doris now wrote to request his return to them, saying that any appearance of a quarrel with him would only serve

still more to injure Hilda, who, however, insisted on his ceasing to consider it necessary to defend her either in word or deed, and, to prevent further conflicts, they had resolved to leave Ulm for Tirol, if the removal were still practicable.

Frank found this note on his table in Pallersberg's room as they entered it together late at night, after a sharp engagement with the army of observation under Ney. The Imperialists had forced the French to retreat with great loss of men and baggage; and Frank and Pallersberg, having afterwards formed part of the escort of some hundreds of prisoners, who, after much delay and difficulty, had been quartered in the Latin schoolhouses of the overfilled town, were among the last to reach their rooms, a good deal fatigued, but still in a state of considerable exultation.

'From Doris!' cried Frank, eagerly taking up the note, seating himself at a table, and drawing a candle towards him.

'Pallersberg,' he said, after a pause, 'it seems that some infernal gossip has been unnecessarily communicative concerning me, for Hilda forbids my further interference in her affairs.'

'I am glad of it,' said Pallersberg, 'for your quixotic encounters have been anything but advantageous to her.'

'I have, at least, ensured silence on the subject of the tower at Forsteck, Pallersberg.'

'Silence in your presence, yes, and that may be a satisfaction to you; but what advantage is it to her? Can you silence the inhabitants of Ulm and its neighbourhood for miles around? Can you silence the garrison or the Bavarian *chevaux-légers* officers now at Elchingen, or even Sigmund Waldering himself?'

'He's a scoundrel!' cried Frank, 'a sanctimonious scoundrel, who won't fight!'

'Oh! you've tried him, have you?'

Frank was silent.

'Sigmund has many faults,' said Pallersberg, 'but want of courage is not one of them. Believe me, the fear of displeasing your cousin Doris alone influenced him on this occasion.'

'Doris?'

'He loves her,' said Pallersberg, 'has loved her for years.'

'I know that,' answered Frank, 'every one loves and admires her, as a matter of course; but all I can say is, if a cousin or even a brother of Doris's said half as much to me as I did to Sigmund, when speaking about his conduct to Hilda, I——'

'You,' interposed Pallersberg, 'you would have given yourself the satisfaction of either shooting

him, or being shot by him, without for a moment considering the consequences to the cousin you professed to love.'

'Now, don't preach to-night, Pallersberg, for I'm very tired,' said Frank, stretching out his legs, 'and so hungry that I feel rather inclined to be quarrelsome than otherwise.'

'I am sorry to hear that,' said Pallersberg, 'for I must give you my opinion of the state of your affairs before we part company.'

'Part company! what do you mean?'

'I mean that you must return to the house of your aunt or your cousin, whichever you choose to call it.'

'Ha! what's this?' cried Frank, referring to Doris's note; by Jove, 'you're the fellow who revealed my misdoings to my aunt and Doris!'

'Yes,' said Pallersberg, quietly, 'you see in me the "infernal gossip" who wished to prevent you from losing your own life, or taking that of others unnecessarily.'

'Halt!' cried Frank, angrily; 'no,—go on; you may say what you please.'

'I believe I may,' continued Pallersberg, 'for besides being the "gossip" you would also find me a "sanctimonious scoundrel," if an occasion should present itself.'

'Do you mean that if I provoked you, you wouldn't——'

'I would not,' said Pallersberg.

'On account of my aunt, I suppose?' said Frank.

'Just so; I can scarcely imagine your inducing me to do anything that would make me forfeit her esteem.'

'All right!' said Frank; 'I wish we had something to eat.'

'And I,' said Pallersberg, with some annoyance, 'I wish you would listen to what I have to say without reminding me that you are still a boy!'

'Go on, then, old fellow,' cried Frank, laughing; 'you're a man, but I suspect just now as hungry as I am!'

'Shall I ask the people of the house if they can give us anything?' said Pallersberg, turning to the door.

'No; I'll hear you out, and have done with it. What has my aunt desired you to say to me?'

'Nothing; I was about to give you my own opinion—'

'Out with it, then,' cried Frank, impatiently.

'And offer you some advice.'

'Offer as much as you please, but don't expect me to take more than I like. For instance, if you

were to advise me to give up Doris and stop the evil-speaking, lying, and slandering of the inhabitants of Ulm by marrying Hilda, I should simply say no!'

'And I,' said Pallersberg, 'should remind you that on all occasions, and especially when these inhabitants of Ulm were present, you paid such marked attention to your cousin Hilda, that Sigmund's patience astonished me as much as it did other people, and I never doubted that the detention at Forsteck would be used by you both as an excuse to break off a previous engagement, the fulfilment of which had so evidently become irksome.'

'You mean Hilda's and Sigmund's;' said Frank, 'but mine with Doris——'

'Was not known,' answered Pallersberg; 'was not even suspected. Mademoiselle O'More has never shown the slightest preference for you in public that is not perfectly consistent with your relationship; while Hilda has unconsciously betrayed her feelings to all the world! I can assure you, Frank, that under other circumstances I should be the last to urge your marriage with her, or, indeed, any one, until you have become steadier.'

'That,' said Frank, 'was precisely what I meant

when I told Doris she must wait until I was a colonel.'

'And,' asked Pallersberg, 'and she made no objection to the arrangement?'

'None whatever; was quite glad of the put off, I suspect; Doris is not a marrying girl!'

'And you are satisfied with this quiet passionless sort of regard?'

'Why not? it is very convenient just now.'

'And for the sake of a person whose indifference you acknowledge, our beautiful young heiress is to be made unhappy for life!'

'Doris is not indifferent; she does not parade her affection, that's all. And the short and long of the matter is, I won't marry and give up my profession for any woman in Christendom.'

'You need not give up your profession,' suggested Pallersberg.

'I know better,' said Frank; 'Doris could never be induced to move about with a regiment.'

'Of course not,' replied Pallersberg; 'you would not ask, nor would she ever propose such a thing. Hilda thinks differently—is willing to accede to any arrangement you may propose.'

'You would find it difficult to convince me that she said so,' replied Frank, ironically.

'Her mother seemed to have no doubt on the subject, and authorised me to speak to you.'

'And,' asked Frank, colouring deeply, 'and was Doris present when my aunt said this?'

'No, we were alone; but what matters it? Has not Mademoiselle O'More released you from your engagement to her? Has she not (I must say nobly) declared that she will not be an impediment to her sister's happiness?'

'Yes,' said Frank bitterly, 'it was some such fine phrase that drove me from the house.'

'To which, however, you will now return, for appearance' sake,' said Pallersberg, persuasively.

'For appearance' sake!' repeated Frank; 'will my return be really of use to Hilda?'

'Most undoubtedly,' replied Pallersberg; 'not only your return, but, if possible, your appearance with her in public, and avoidance of anything like disunion with her family.'

'You may be right,' said Frank thoughtfully, 'and I am certainly bound to do all that I can. Yes, Pallersberg, I will go, and at once, though I would far rather storm one of the enemy's batteries, than mount the staircase of that old corner house just now.'

He threw his cloak over his shoulders while

speaking the last words, and strode towards the door.

'Will you not make some change in your dress before meeting your aunt and cousins?' asked Pallersberg.

'No; but tell Hans to pack up, and follow me as soon as he can.'

'Halt, Frank; you really have no idea how wild you look, bespattered with mud and blood.'

'Can't help it,' said Frank; 'the other coat may be dry, but it is in no better condition than this one; and, in short, I don't know where to find it. At all events my aunt can look upon a uniform in this condition without disgust; and dear Doris must put aside her fastidiousness, and learn to brave the hardships of a siege, for leaving Ulm, as she proposes, is now out of the question. I shall have to tell her that there is much more likelihood of her sharing the rations of horse-flesh they talked about at head-quarters this morning.'

'I hope we may get them, Frank,' said Pallersberg; 'horseflesh, or anything that will enable us to hold out until the Russians arrive.'

'I would rather fight out, than hold out,' said Frank. 'The Archduke says if we are not strong enough to give battle, there is no use in crowding

the town with cavalry; and, if he leave Ulm, I hope we may be commanded to go with him.'

'Not much chance for you, Frank, for, since your proficiency in French has been discovered, you may expect to be employed continually as scrivener and interpreter. But now return to your relations without further delay; it is so late that they may have already left the drawing-room.'

'Just what I should like,' answered Frank, hurrying down the stairs into the cold wet streets.

The entrance to the Waldering house was open, and a soldier who stood before the door was speaking to others employed within, where the vaulted space at the foot of the staircase had been converted into a stable.

'Halloa, Korinsky!' cried Frank, to a young officer who was passing him with a hasty salute, 'do you know if Klenau's wounds are dangerous?'

'No,—yes; that is, I don't remember. My brother has just died, O'More; and, as they want his bed, poor fellow! I have proposed removing him to the garden. May we not leave him in the pavilion there until morning?'

'Of course, of course,' said Frank; 'I hoped

his wounds were not mortal, as he kept his saddle after the charge.'

A few steps further on Frank drew aside to let the officers pass who were carrying the body of their comrade down the stairs; and, as he mechanically raised his hand to his forehead, while gazing at the lifeless figure, it would have been difficult to decide whether the grave salute was intended as a greeting for the living, or a mark of respect for the dead.

He found the entrance-door of the first story still open, the light in the ante-room extinguished; but on groping his way to the drawing-room, perceived not only a small night-lamp burning, but beside it a wax taper, which he thought had more than probably been placed there for him. Men—especially young and houseless men—are not very observant of the appearance or furniture of rooms; but as Frank raised the taper, and looked round him, he was unpleasantly struck by the dreary aspect of the once cheerful apartment; so much so that he found it difficult to convince himself that the chairs, tables, and curtains, were unchanged. He did not perceive that the costly parquet floor, formerly polished, and bright as a mirror, was now soiled and rayless; that the

various ornaments of an elaborately rococo-furnished room had been removed, and that not a trace of the books or work of his aunt and cousins remained; but the green-baize cloth thrown over a marble table, and the ordinary writing materials strewed upon it, indicated plainly enough that the room had been used as an office, and was deserted by its former inhabitants.

He walked as noiselessly as possible along the stone corridor to his room, opened the door softly, and suddenly found himself in the presence of a young man, who, with arms spread out on a table, held in his clasped hands a small green-leather case, and gazed on the miniature portrait that it contained so earnestly, that he did not look round until Frank stepped into the room, and almost stood beside him.

'D'Esterre!'

'François!'

And Louis d'Esterre sprang up and embraced Frank with that unreserved demonstration of affection that our countrymen reserve altogether for women. Frank, however, had been long enough from home to submit with very tolerable composure to a succession of kisses from a bearded mouth; he did not feel disposed to return them,

but, waiting until the *épanchement* was over, he stretched out his hand, saying, 'Well, old boy, what has brought you here?'

'The chance of war,' answered Louis, shrugging his shoulders. 'Taken prisoner, I bethought me of *le Comte Sigismond de Waldering et—ma foi—me voilà!*'

'Speak English, Louis,' said Frank, 'and don't remind me that you are a Frenchman—if you can help it.'

'*Non, mon ami;* I have not forgot that English so agreeably learned in your hospitable house, and,' he added, glancing towards the miniature on the table—'and this evening I have had much remembrances of those happy times with *cette chère et charmante* Doris!'

'So it was her picture you were adoring just now?'

'Well guess! I have stealed it from the *salon*, and will keep it if I dare.'

'You had better ask permission,' said Frank, greatly irritated at no longer having the right to insist on its restitution.

'She say,' exclaimed d'Esterre in a sentimental voice—'she say we are *ennemis*, but she call me *Louis!*'

'Did she expect me this evening?' asked Frank, abruptly.

'Oh, yees. Did you not find the *bougie* and her *petit billet* telling you about the *chambre?*'

'*Petit billet?*' repeated Frank, 'I must go and look for it. Good-night!'

He left the room far less quietly than he had entered it, and returned to the drawing-room, where he wondered greatly how he could have overseen a note so evidently placed to attract attention—the light from the lamp actually falling brightly on his name written in large, distinct characters.

He seated himself on the sofa, and read:—

'I am sure you will come, and I hope you may find and read these lines before going to your room, which we have been obliged to give to Louis d'Esterre, who was brought here by Sigmund. Mamma's dressing-room has been prepared for your reception, but if you are not too tired I wish you would wait where you find this note until all is quiet in the house, as I shall then make an effort to see you for a few minutes alone.'

Frank extinguished his taper, leaned back in the corner of the sofa, gazed drowsily at the lamp

for a few minutes, then opened his eyes suddenly to their fullest extent, and looked round the room as if determined not to yield to the fatigue that was overwhelming him, forced himself to sit upright for a short time, and finally murmuring 'She won't mind,' stretched himself at full length, and almost instantly was fast asleep.

So fast asleep that the sound of booted and spurred feet treading heavily not only on the stairs but in the room above, the closing and locking of doors, and even the entrance and approach of Doris herself, failed to rouse or disturb Frank until she placed her candle on the table, and, retiring behind the sofa on which he lay, fixed her eyes steadily on his face, when an expression of uneasiness passed over it, he breathed quickly—moved—and the lightest touch of her hand was sufficient to waken him completely.

'I ought not to have asked you to wait for me, Frank,' she began, apologetically; 'you must be so dreadfully fatigued.'

'Well, I have undoubtedly had some hard work,' he answered, smiling—'under arms and mounted nearly two-and-twenty hours! Nothing less would have made me fall asleep, Doris, when I expected to see you!'

'I should not have been so unreasonable,' she

continued, 'were it not that this is the only time I can see you alone without exciting the suspicions of Hilda.'

'Suspicions?—Hilda!'

'Yes, dear Frank; she fears I may be tempted to betray her, and I am about to do so—it is our last chance.'

'Now, Doris, dear, speak plainly and straightforwardly — you know I am a bad hand at enigmas.'

'To speak plainly, then, Frank, I must begin by reminding you of that unfortunate adventure which your late injudicious interference has only served to make still more known to every one in Ulm and its vicinity.'

'I hope you are not going to talk again of that cursed old tower, Doris,' he began, impatiently.

'Not of the tower,' she said quietly, 'but of your and Hilda's imprisonment in it.'

'S'death!' he cried, starting up, and beginning to stride up and down the room; 'have I not told you, and my aunt, and every one, that I cannot be made answerable for that? D—— the tower, and everything belonging to it! May the French pillage, plunder, blast it to atoms—raze it to the ground!'

'All to no purpose,' said Doris; 'the destruction of the tower will neither deprive people of memories nor speech.'

'It seems, however, Doris, that your memory is not what it used to be, or—' he said, stopping opposite her—'or you would recollect all I said on this subject when we parted not quite amicably about a week ago.'

'I have not forgotten,' she answered, seating herself on the sofa, and with a slight gesture inducing him to take the place beside her; 'I have not forgotten, but I did not think it possible you would persist in your refusal when you were convinced that my resolution to break off our engagement was irrevocable. It seems, however, that we do not yet know each other.'

'I am learning to know you,' said Frank; 'learning also to believe Pallersberg when he calls your regard for me quiet and passionless. Oh, Doris! if you really and truly loved me, you *could* not resign me to any one—not even to Hilda!'

'I would not—I could not, Frank, if—if I had not discovered that Hilda loves you devotedly, and as passionately as—as you can possibly desire.'

To Doris's surprise, Frank appeared neither astonished nor dismayed at this communication, which she expected to have had the same effect on him as on herself. An air of bored consciousness was, however, expressive enough; and a sudden revulsion of feeling made her exclaim,

'Frank! if you knew this before you went to Forsbeck, you have acted with unpardonable selfishness, and are far more to blame than I believed possible!'

'I knew nothing, and never thought about the matter,' said Frank; 'the people here and Pallersberg have been talking, but I hope they and you are mistaken.'

'We are not mistaken — there is no doubt whatever.'

'It is an infernal business altogether,' said Frank, 'and I shall end by becoming a victim to circumstances over which I had no control.'

'Then you consent?' cried Doris, eagerly.

'I—suppose—I *must*; but it will prove a complete reversion of the order of things if Hilda have to make advances to me, and I try to return her affection—when I can.'

Doris stood up.

'Stay, Doris; you cannot expect me to make

this great sacrifice unconditionally! You must hear my stipulations. In the first place, I will not give up my profession——'

'You need not,' she said, faintly.

'Nor will I live with Hilda for the next ten years.'

'I dare say she will—of course, she must—consent to this also,' replied Doris.

'You would,' said Frank; 'but then your regard for me, I am now convinced, was merely that of one cousin for another.'

'If it were not hitherto,' said Doris, her voice faltering in spite of all her efforts to conceal her emotion—'if it were not hitherto, it must be so henceforward.'

'Doris!—Doris!' he cried, passionately, 'you would show more feeling for me if you knew how much I value a kind word or look from you! Dispose of me as you will,' he added, putting his arm round her, 'but let me hear once more that you *have* loved me, *do* love me, and will *ever* love me! Say that, in resigning me to satisfy the prejudices of the world, you feel not only for me, but with me.'

'I can say so, Frank, most truly,' she answered, while large tears fell fast from her eyes in confirmation of her words.

'I believe you,' he said, rising; 'and ask no more. My aunt would call me selfish to wish it so, Doris; but love is selfish, and I love you, and have loved you more than I ever knew—till now!'

'Let us hope, Frank, that time will reconcile——'

'No, Doris,' he cried, interrupting her; 'time will make no change in me.'

'It will,' she said gently, 'in you and in me also; and Hilda will never be quite conscious how much her happiness has cost us; for I am sure, Frank, you know me too well to think of attempting to prove your affection for me by an ostentatious neglect of her.'

'As your sister,' he answered, 'and as my cousin, I liked her; but as a wife forced upon me, I hate her!'

'I am sorry you think it necessary to say so,' observed Doris; 'but you know, dear Frank, it is not in your nature to hate any woman, and,' she added with a trembling smile—'and especially one so young and singularly attractive as Hilda.'

Frank, like all men of action, ever more influenced by his feelings than his understanding, threw himself impetuously at her feet, and, raising his clasped hands, exclaimed,

'Hear me, Doris! I will give Hilda my hand and name at your command; but I swear by Heaven that neither ten years hence nor ever shall she be more to me than——'

'What madness is this!' cried Doris, interrupting him. 'Can you for a moment doubt that I desire her and your happiness? Let me assure you that every effort on your part to conceal your repugnance to this marriage I shall consider and value as a proof of personal regard for me.'

Frank could not bring himself to believe this, but, feeling suddenly the choking sensation in his throat that usually precedes an outburst of grief, he made no attempt to speak, let his head sink on his knee, and remained perfectly motionless until Doris bent down and pressed her lips on the only part of his forehead that was visible. Perhaps he felt her tears—she saw his chest heave violently—heard a sound that resembled a suppressed sob, and hurried from the room agitated and shocked at an exhibition of feeling for which she had been totally unprepared.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARRY IN HASTE, AND REPENT AT LEISURE.

After a few hours' repose, the inmates of the Waldering house were once more up and beginning to move about in the twilight of a foggy morning. Drums were beating and trumpets sounding in a manner as intelligible as speech to military ears, and among the first who hastened to obey these calls was Frank. He had seen his aunt for a few minutes while breakfasting, had confirmed his promise of the previous night, and given his aunt leave to make any arrangements she pleased as far as he was concerned, but declined remaining longer in a house where the Director and Sigmund considered themselves at home.

'This house may be yours to-morrow—to-day, if you wish it, Frank,' she had suggested quickly.

'A few ounces of lead from a well-handled French musket would be more acceptable to me

just now,' had been his muttered answer when leaving the room.

And long had been the consultation afterwards between Doris and her mother as to what Hilda might be told, and what it would be absolutely necessary to conceal from her, for some time at least; the result being that they would inform her that Frank had agreed to the marriage, but, as he would not consent to give up his profession, and could not expect her to move about with him under existing circumstances, it had been arranged that she was to remain with them until the war was ended.

While Doris went to make this communication to Hilda, her mother entered the adjoining room, where Sigmund and his father were still lingering over their breakfast, and though quite aware that the Director's exasperation concerning Hilda had been the work of his son, and that she had latterly observed an unconcealed diminution of his anger, she was nevertheless a good deal surprised to find her present intelligence received by him with a look of blank disappointment.

'I rather expected you to rejoice with me at the prospect of so satisfactory a termination to this unfortunate affair,' she said, looking from one to the other.

'Well—yes—I suppose it's all for the best,' said the Director, embarrassed; 'but a——I must say Sigmund has been hasty in this business, and now that I am convinced of poor dear Hilda's innocence——'

'Of that,' said his sister-in-law, interrupting him, 'I believe even Sigmund had no doubt.'

'None whatever,' said Sigmund; 'but, as I could not induce other people to take my view of the case, you must acknowledge there was no alternative but breaking off our engagement.'

'Perhaps so; but it might have been done less violently,' observed his aunt; 'and, at all events, with some consideration for her and our feelings.'

'I should have acted otherwise,' answered Sigmund, 'if Hilda had not irritated me by her open preference for Frank, and made me the laughing-stock of Ulm ever since we have been here!'

There was much truth in this remark, and she turned to her brother-in-law while observing, 'Recriminations are useless, and I am sure you will agree with me in thinking that the sooner now this marriage takes place the better.'

'On that subject,' cried Sigmund eagerly, 'there can be no doubt whatever; for O'More is so

thoroughly a man of impulse that any delay would be a risk.'

'On him we may rely,' she answered, with a sigh; but I think if Hilda be given much time for consideration, she will refuse to accept the sacrifice her sister has made for her.'

'All this may be very fine,' said the Director, testily; 'but I must say, if things had remained as they were, it would have been pleasanter in the end for us all! Sigmund would have had Hilda's fortune to put his affairs in order; Frank O'More would not have been encumbered with a wife, and we should have had the undisturbed enjoyment of our charming Doris's society for years to come; whereas now Hilda will wish to live in Austria, in order to be near her husband, and you and Doris will follow her!'

'We have at present no plans of the kind,' she answered; 'and I am even inclined to think that the state of our finances will compel us to reside for some time at Westenried.'

'Ah?—ah!—that alters the case in some degree; and with regard to the marriage, delay is useless if it be a thing decided upon. We have only to substitute the name of Frank O'More for that of Sigmund Count Waldering in the various documents already in my possession, and everything

is in order. Permit me, however, to suggest some changes in the pecuniary arrangements, while reminding you that Sigmund's position and prospects were very different from this young Irishman's, who, a younger son and literally penniless, cannot possibly expect——'

'I don't know what he expects,' she said, interrupting him; 'but I know what, under the circumstances, he may claim as a right, and therefore request that the arrangements may be precisely the same as proposed by you for Sigmund, with the exception of the double performance of the marriage ceremony,—one will now be sufficient, and I believe we may appoint the Protestant clergyman for this evening.'

At this moment a servant entered, bringing the report from head-quarters which Sigmund had requested the officers then residing in the house to send him. It described the engagement of the previous day with Marshal Ney; said that, from intercepted papers, no doubt could be entertained that the storming of the town had been projected; mentioned that between eight and nine hundred prisoners had been taken, and commended the different regiments by name that had been engaged.

The Countess Waldering received at the same

time a request to furnish ninety rations of soup, to be sent as soon as possible to the school-house, where the French prisoners were in confinement.

She handed the paper to her brother-in-law, and asked with a look of perplexity, 'Is that an order for to-day, or for a time indefinite?'

'I don't know,' he answered; 'but you must send the soup to-day at all events.'

'Of course; our stores, however, are nearly exhausted, and there is hardly anything to be had in the town now, excepting potatoes and cheese.'

The Director turned to his son with a rueful expression of countenance, and observed, 'We shall come to the horseflesh at last! Who was it that told us it tasted exactly like veal?'

'Pallersberg said so, I believe,' answered Sigmund; 'but if the French gain the heights round the town, a few shells will prove the impossibility of defending it for any length of time.'

'You, of course, hope it may be so,' observed his aunt, vainly endeavouring to hide her annoyance; 'but you must allow me still to think it possible that the Russians may come to our relief.'

'I did not mean to offend,' said Sigmund,

apologetically, 'and assure you I only as *ci-devant* soldier ventured an opinion which may prove altogether erroneous.'

'I fear not,' she replied, 'as it is entertained by those who would rather think otherwise. However,' she added, addressing the Director, 'to go from great things to small ones, which more immediately concern us, I suppose I may depend on your making the necessary arrangements for this evening?'

'Undoubtedly. But allow me to propose ensuring the appearance of the bridegroom, who may chance to be on guard, or on picket, or whatever they call it. You had better consult with him, or send to Captain Pallersberg, and request him to bring O'More to the cathedral at four o'clock in the afternoon. As guardian,' he continued, walking with her to the door, 'I should like to protest against this hurried marriage, but——'

'But,' she said, interrupting him, 'you feel, perhaps, that you have no right to do so after having been the first person to propose it.'

'It was at Sigmund's instigation that I did so,' cried the Director. 'His anger and jealousy were quite ungovernable.'

'Not so,' she observed; 'he has long wished

for a plausible excuse to break off his engagement, but would, perhaps, have chosen another time and less unfeeling means had he not had motives which made this opportunity, for various reasons, the most desirable ever likely to occur.'

'Well,' said the Director, as the door closed, 'he has much penetration, but this time has rather overshot the mark, I believe.'

'Not exactly,' said Sigmund; 'I certainly had no objection to a plausible excuse for breaking off my engagement to Hilda, whose preference for Frank is notorious; but surely mine for Doris cannot have been less well known both to you and my aunt, though neither of you chose to appear conscious of it.'

'Would you have wished it otherwise, Sigmund, when Doris's indifference to you was so very evident? And can you suppose you have the slightest chance, now that this indifference will be converted into actual dislike by your conduct to her sister and its consequences to herself?'

'Dislike is more easily overcome than indifference,' said Sigmund confidently. 'Let Frank be married to Hilda, and leave the rest to me.'

'I begin to wish you were all married,' said the Director, as he walked to the other end of

the room, and drew a chair towards his writing-table.

'All!' repeated his son, laughing; 'who do you mean by *all?*'

'Every one, with the exception of your grandmother,' was the answer.

'Yourself included?'

'Why not? Men older than I am have married, and will marry to the end of time. My sister-in-law says that it is a pleasant infatuation of our sex to imagine ourselves capable of inspiring affection, even at the most advanced period of life.'

Ha!' cried Sigmund, 'Mina Pallersberg once hinted that you—but the idea is preposterous!'

'Quite so,' said his father, without looking round; 'but Mina has a good deal of discernment in such matters, and says that your plans now are also —preposterous.'

'Mina is a most intriguing, dangerous girl,' said Sigmund, 'and I wish my grandmother would send her home to her parents, or otherwise dispose of her.'

'You were not always of this opinion,' observed his father, drily.

Sigmund was silent.

'But,' he continued, while arranging his papers

—'but that you have overcome any feeling beyond good-will and regard for her now, is very satisfactory.'

'I do not feel a particle of either,' answered Sigmund, 'and repeat that I think her a most dangerous and intriguing character. It is impossible to calculate the mischief such a person can perpetrate in a family like ours, so I hope when you wished us all married Mina Pallersberg was included, in which case I can only say, the sooner the better.'

'Be it so,' said the Director. 'As, however, Hilda happens to be the first, I must now take her affairs in hand, and without further loss of time. It will be a dismal business altogether this marriage, and I wish it were well over!

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A few hours later the soup required for the French prisoners was sent from the house—then an effort made to supply the billeted officers and soldiers with a repast, while the family assembled about the same time in a small sitting-room overlooking the garden, to dine, with a frugality to which they were gradually becoming accustomed. Hilda and Doris were not present—no one seemed

to expect them or consider an apology necessary; but when the Director saw his sister-in-law preparing to return to them, he drew out his watch and observed significantly, 'I hope they are dressed, for we must soon be on our way to the Cathedral.'

Scarcely had she closed the door when she heard the stamping of horses and rolling of wheels on the paving-stones of the yard, and seeing a servant springing up the stairs to announce the carriage she entered her room, not sorry to have a pretext for putting an end to the painful situation in which her rival daughters had been placed since the morning.

Doris was calm and self-possessed—perhaps the feeling that she was acting magnanimously supported her—while Hilda, conscious of a latent satisfaction at the prospect of a marriage with Frank under any circumstances, was thoroughly ashamed of her selfishness and felt deeply humiliated in accepting the sacrifice so unostentatiously made by her sister.

'Mama,' she said, hurriedly, 'Doris says she thinks Frank will be quite satisfied if I leave him perfectly at liberty and do not interfere with his plan of remaining in the army. The idea of being forced upon him in this way is so dreadful, that

did I not know how much he likes me, and had he not told me unreservedly a hundred times that he loved me next best to Doris, I——'

'Hilda!' cried the Director, knocking at the door, 'we are waiting for you!'

'Doris,' she said, clasping her hands and kneeling before her sister, who was waiting to place a white veil on her head, 'dear Doris, say once more that you forgive me.'

'Rather let me again explain that I have nothing to forgive, Hilda. Your ride to Forsteck with Frank really requires no apology, and for what has since occurred you cannot be made answerable.'

Somewhat consoled by these words, Hilda rose, drew her black velvet pelisse over her white dress and, covering her face with her veil, followed her mother out of the room.

A few minutes afterwards they were on their way to the Cathedral, followed by the Director, his mother, and Mina Pallersberg, in another carriage. The way was not long to the beautiful building, and at the portal, just dismounted from their horses, they found Frank and Pallersberg. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, a number of people had collected round the entrance, who unceremoniously followed them into the

church, and even to the private chapel in which the ceremony was to take place, where, with faces pressed against the filigree-work of the iron gate that separated it from the main building, they wondered in whispers why there were so few friends present, and what made both bride and bridegroom look so deadly pale?

The marriage ceremony commenced: to Doris it appeared like part of a troubled dream, especially when the exchange of rings was to take place, and she knew Hilda had none, and was sure Frank had never thought about the matter: her mother, however, advanced and quickly drew from her finger her own wedding-ring, gave it to Frank, and then put into Hilda's trembling hand the ring that had been found by them on the previous Holy-Eve in the crypt of the church on the Chapel-island. The midnight scene then recurred to Hilda's mind with painful vividness, and it was with a feeling of perplexity and consternation that she nervously placed the ring on Frank's finger, audibly drawing in her breath, and afterwards raising her eyes for the first time anxiously to his countenance. He, too, seemed startled, and a crowd of recollections brought a deep flush to his face and temples, until a glance towards Doris again deprived him of every trace of colour.

When they again stood before the door of the church, and as Frank, after having placed Hilda and Doris in the carriage, drew aside to allow Pallersberg and his aunt to pass him, the Director placed his hand on his arm and whispered, 'You will come back with us, O'More, if only for appearance' sake and to sign the papers?'

'Impossible!' he answered, beckoning to the soldier who held his horse: 'I must return to the redoubt on the Michaelsberg.'

He waited until joined by Pallersberg; they sprang on their horses at the same moment, raised their hands in salute, and dashed at full gallop across the open space before the Cathedral.

'Doris,' said Hilda, with faltering voice, 'he did not speak to me—scarcely even looked at me!'

'My dear child,' observed her mother, gravely, 'you must have patience with Frank for a little while; he may, perhaps, think it necessary to affect indifference towards you, in order not to appear fickle to Doris.'

Hilda turned quickly to her sister: 'Is this likely, Doris? You know him best.'

'Oh—very—likely,' panted Doris, with a painful effort to smile, while vividly recalling poor

Frank's anguish when they had parted on the previous night.

'I am sorry,' said their mother, taking a hand of each, 'very sorry to see you both suffering so much. It will scarcely serve as consolation to tell you that I was once in my life far more severely tried—far more thoroughly unhappy than either of you!'

'Do not for a moment suppose that I am unhappy, dear mother,' cried Doris, hastily; 'or Hilda either, though her sudden marriage may have confused and alarmed her.'

'I do feel confused,' said Hilda, 'and I dare say Frank is the same; that unlucky ring, too, may have made an unpleasant impression on him.'

'That is not probable,' observed her mother, 'as he knows it was worn many years by your father, and never considered unlucky. You must not become superstitious, Hilda.'

'How can I help it,' she asked, despondingly, 'when I remember where and how we found that ring?—and Frank so pale, that he reminded me horribly of the apparition I saw in the vaults of the chapel?'

The carriage stopped, and the wedding party slowly ascended the stairs, on which a group of

officers had assembled to congratulate Frank on what they chose to call his clandestine marriage. They lingered there, too, for some time, in expectation of his probable arrival on horseback, returning to their rooms at last in great astonishment at his non-appearance, which, to them, was perfectly incomprehensible, as they knew that, like themselves, he was that day free from military duty, and therefore his absence must be voluntary.

It was so, in fact, and Pallersberg had been obliged to connive at this breach of decorum, in order that the first outburst of Frank's wrath and despair might be vented on him, instead of the youthful bride.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FREEDOM IN CHAINS.

About this time the Archduke Ferdinand left Ulm, preferring a retreat of the most perilous description to the capitulation which the tardy approach of the Russians made every day more probable. Frank's hopes of leaving the town were frustrated by a wounded general, who had taken up his quarters in the Waldering house, choosing to retain him as aide-de-camp; and in consequence of this he was not only obliged to be there continually, but, notwithstanding all his efforts to make it evident that his intercourse with the family was a matter of necessity, and not choice, frequent meetings, and even long discussions, soon became unavoidable, his near relationship causing him to be chosen as the bearer of requests or demands that would otherwise have been made by letter.

At first Frank thought it indispensable to affect a press of business and extreme haste when de-

livering his messages; by degrees, however, he discovered that his aunt and Doris were perfectly unchanged in their manner towards him, and that the Director and Sigmund never attempted to dispute any requisition made by him, no matter how unreasonable it might appear to them; but it was not until he brought a demand for the Waldering horses to remount some cuirassiers that he perceived a sort of whispered appeal made to his neglected bride, as she sat somewhat apart from the others at a distant window, when the acquiescent motion of her head, and the words, 'Of course; why ask me?' suddenly, and not agreeably, reminded him that she was proprietress of the house, and all that it contained.

For the first time since their marriage he addressed her directly while saying, half-apologetically, 'We only require the carriage-horses, Hilda.'

'And why have you not taken them?' she asked, looking up, and blushing deeply.

'Because I have received orders to purchase, not take,' he answered, resuming the air of distant politeness, which he considered expressive of his determination not to be won by her efforts to conciliate; 'But,' he continued, 'I suppose your uncle or cousin will be better able to name a price than you.'

'The horses are yours, Frank;' she rejoined timidly, 'to sell or dispose of in any way that you think proper.'

Poor Hilda! She meant to please, and gave dire offence. Frank was irritated at being offered as a gift, what he came to purchase. He would not at that moment have accepted anything from her under any circumstances; so he turned abruptly to Sigmund, and asked him what he thought the horses were worth.

'Taking the present circumstances into consideration,' answered Sigmund, 'I suppose we must not venture to suggest as the price what they cost last year in Munich?'

'I should think not!' said Frank, laughing ironically; 'rather a good deal less; for, though the bays are well enough, one of the grays must be fired for spavin before six weeks are over!'

'Spavin!' repeated Sigmund, looking towards his father. 'Did you buy a spavined horse for Hilda?'

'Not intentionally,' answered the Director, quietly; 'but as you were not with us, and I am ignorant on such subjects, I was obliged to trust altogether to a horsedealer.'

'At all events,' observed Sigmund, 'it cannot be very evident, or I should have discovered it.'

'I am ready to prove my assertion,' said Frank, walking to the door, 'and I hope you will excuse my driving a hard bargain, for our funds are very low just now.'

'Well!' exclaimed the Director when they had left the room, 'that is as remarkable an instance of perversity as can well be imagined!'

'We must make some allowance for him just now,' observed Doris. 'You know he has been retained here against his will; and he told mama this morning that, instead of receiving his promotion in his own regiment, as he had hoped, he is appointed to the Hussars, now in Vienna.'

'Did he tell you the reason?' asked the Director.

'No.'

'Then I can. It is in consequence of his various *passages d'armes* with his comrades about —about——'

'About me!' said Hilda. 'No wonder he has learned to dislike me!'

'Ah, bah! that won't last long,' said the Director, laughing; and this change has served to prove that he has many and powerful friends. Sigmund heard that there were two other generals who would have taken him as aide-de-camp, and

not a single officer in his regiment could be induced to bear witness against him.'

'What!' exclaimed Doris, 'not even those he had wounded?'

'No. They were so chivalrous as to say that the provocation had been great, and that he had only acted as they would have done in his place; besides, it was proved that he had visited, sat up at night with them, and, I believe, dressed their wounds!'

'Oh, how I like him for all this!' cried Hilda enthusiastically.

'Quixotic, as usual,' said Doris—the expression of her face giving anything rather than a disparaging meaning to the words.

'Courageous he is, at all events,' observed the Director, 'and disinterested, too, we must suppose, from his present effort to buy his wife's horses a bargain for these cuirassiers.'

'He is quite right,' said Hilda.

'I am glad you think so, my dear,' said the Director, 'and hope you may have reason to be equally satisfied with him in every respect.'

'I am—that is, I should be quite satisfied if he were once more gay and like himself; to make him so, I could almost wish the Russians here and the French defeated!'

"'Hear the youthful rebel!' cried the Director, laughing. Four days married, and already a complete change of politics!'

'No,' cried Hilda eagerly, 'I am quite Bavarian still, and admire Napoleon as much as ever.'

'And no doubt,' interposed Doris, with some vehemence, 'your admiration will be increased when Ulm is bombarded, and the country about it completely devastated.'

'M. d'Esterre,' replied Hilda, 'told me that Napoleon will spare the town, as the burghers are known to be well disposed towards him.'

'More shame for them!' began Doris.

'My dear girls,' cried their mother, interfering, 'you promised me to avoid this subject—the only one on which you ever disagree. Believe me, a few years hence you and all of us will think alike of this great general, but most perfidious and unscrupulous of men!'

The Director shook his head and smiled ironically; but thinking it better to avoid a useless discussion, he left the room, saying he had an appointment at the commissariat about forage. Doris and her mother soon after followed, no longer either thinking or speaking of Napoleon, but in deep consultation about the reception of additional troops that were to be billeted on them;

while Hilda, the person, in fact, most of all concerned in these arrangements, pursued the occupation then universally prevalent in Ulm—the preparing of lint and bandages for a temporary hospital that had been established in what had once been and was still called the Wengen Monastery. The table before her was covered with long strips and narrow rolls of carefully docketed linen, heaps of fine and coarse lint, far more than enough to fill the basket placed beside her for their reception, but still she cut, and picked, and folded, only looking up for a moment when Frank suddenly returned to the room, apparently more surprised than pleased to find her alone in it.

'Sigmund declines receiving the money for the horses,' he said, advancing to the table; 'and though I hoped to find the Director or my aunt here, you will do as well, or better than either, as the money is, in fact, yours.' Here he pushed aside some of the lint and linen, and began to count his bank-notes in a most businesslike manner.

'I have not purchased these horses for myself, Hilda,' he said with some hesitation, 'and therefore must beg you to sign this paper, acknowledging having received the sum of——'

He stopped, and Hilda looked up inquiringly.

'It is a matter of business,' he added hastily, 'and you know I must have something in the form of a receipt to show.'

'I did not think of that,' she said, rising so hastily that, in passing to another table where there were writing materials, her dress swept the carefully arranged notes to the ground. Then taking up a pen, she inadvertently, and in a handwriting rendered almost illegible by agitation, signed the name of Waldering!

'That paper is of no use, Hilda; you had better ask the Director to write another,' said Frank, preparing to leave the room.

'Oh, stay—I see my mistake now. Can I not write the—the other name underneath?'

'No; I would rather have the Director's signature.'

'But you are not offended—not angry, I hope?'

'Not in the least. I think it is very probable you prefer the name of Waldering, and if so you can resume it whenever you think it advisable to do so.'

'Frank!' she exclaimed, laying her hand on his arm, 'do you mean what my grandmother

proposed this morning? Do you wish for a—a divorce?'

'I have been told,' he answered, 'that there is no great difficulty in obtaining one in this part of Germany, and, should you desire it, I shall be ready at any time to meet your wishes; the proposal, however, must come from you or your family, for I have no legal cause of complaint, and no object to gain, since Doris is lost to me for ever!'

'No legal cause of complaint!' repeated Hilda. 'I do not understand these things, Frank; but Doris told me that if we did not ask you to leave the army, and that I returned to Westenried with my mother until the war was over, you would be satisfied.'

'Yes; those were my *stipulations*.'

'Before our marriage?' she asked quickly.

'Undoubtedly; otherwise I should never have consented.'

'And I thought they were concessions on my part—made, however, most willingly at Doris's instigation.'

'Call them concessions if you like,' said Frank; 'I only insist on their being understood and adhered to, undeviatingly.'

'Of course,' said Hilda, a good deal alarmed at the irritated tone of his voice,—'of course—and if mama should go to Innsbruck instead of Westenried, have you any objection to my accompanying her?'

'Go where you please, and do what you like,' he answered, turning away; 'I make no pretension to authority in a union that is merely nominal!'

Long after he had left the room, Hilda stood with hands tightly pressed together, flushed cheeks, and eyes resting on the closed door with the steady abstracted gaze of profound thought. It was a long reluctant retrospect, producing much self-condemnation and regret, but was soon succeeded by a strong revulsion of feeling, made at once evident by the parted lips, quick audible breathing, and flashing eyes. Pride and resentment had gained the ascendency, and when Sigmund soon after entered the room, she walked to the window, bent over her parcels of linen while packing them into the basket, and then stooped to collect the scattered bank-notes, in order to place them again on the table.

'I wish, Sigmund,' she said, with that apparent composure by no means uncommon in even very young women in moments of great mental agita-

tion—'I wish you would put this money aside until my uncle returns home.'

'But did not Frank give it to *you?*' he asked.

'Yes—it happened, however, that a receipt was necessary, and when he placed one before me for signature, I thoughtlessly wrote "Waldering" instead of——'

'Ha! ha! ha! capital!—as nice a manœuvre as could well be imagined!'

'It was nothing of the kind, Sigmund—a stupid mistake, only excusable when one takes into consideration how often I have signed the name of Waldering to similar papers since I came to Ulm. Pray send Frank a written acknowledgment this evening, or he will suppose me as negligent as I was thoughtless.'

'Stay, Hilda—one word. Did not this little scene lead to a reconciliation with Frank? Believe me I wish it most sincerely, for his conduct is such that I begin to fear you will feel irritated instead of grateful for my indirect influence in promoting your marriage.'

'I neither feel the one nor the other, Sigmund,' she answered, with forced calmness; 'you had motives for your actions that Mina has since explained to me at some length.'

'Just like her,' he observed bitterly; 'and she

has explained to Doris also, as a matter of course. I hope, however, she pointed out to *her* the great pecuniary sacrifice I made in resigning you?'

'Do not fancy you resigned me,' said Hilda, eagerly seizing the offered vent for the anger rankling at her heart. 'One would really suppose I was a thing to be taken or refused at pleasure! Frank's chivalrous conduct during my eight days' imprisonment would have made me love him, had I never cared for him before, while your double-dealing on that occasion turned at once the little regard I ever felt for you into scorn!'

'If,' said Sigmund with ironical gravity—'if my humiliation can serve to raise your husband in your estimation, I can almost rejoice in it; but you have no right to scorn me for having promoted your marriage with this "dearest, handsomest, bravest," and, as you now tell me, most chivalrous of men! On the contrary, I have every reason to expect you to assist me in return by pleading my cause to Doris, whenever an occasion offers.'

'Plead for yourself; it will be in vain——,' began Hilda; but at that moment Doris appeared at the door to remind her that it was time to go to the hospital.

'I am sorry to tell you,' she said, as they walked

away together, 'that all the rooms and even the corridors of our Wenger Monastery Hospital are now filled with wounded, and the poor men complain more of cold and hunger than of their wounds. There are no mattresses, no cooking utensils, and a great want of linen and other necessaries. A printed request has been sent to all the inhabitants of the town for assistance, and mama desired me to ask you if you object to her sending whatever we can spare?'

'How could I object?' said Hilda; 'Is it not a duty to give everything we possess on such an occasion?'

'Mama said she was sure you would think so,' continued Doris; 'but as the Director was of opinion that valuable wine such as you have in the cellars here would be thrown away if given for hospital use, we thought it better to consult you.'

'Did my uncle say he would not allow me to give it?' asked Hilda.

'No, dear; you forget that since your marriage he has no further control, and Frank will certainly make no objection.'

'I shall not ask him,' said Hilda, with a decision quite unlike her usual manner; 'he makes no pretension to authority in a union that is merely nominal.'

Doris stood still and looked at her sister. 'Did he say this, Hilda?'

'Yes, Doris, and at the same time told me distinctly that I might go where I pleased and do what I liked!'

'Dear Hilda, I am so sorry!—but you will see that in time—'

'In time, Doris, I shall learn to enjoy my independence, and the first use I make of it will be to send all the wine in this house to the hospital!'

CHAPTER XIX.

SOLDIER'S WORK.

THE situation of the inhabitants of Ulm became every day more deplorable. During the last month soldiers had been quartered in all the houses, latterly to the amount of a hundred and fifty and even two hundred in those of very moderate dimensions. For the troops in and about the town rations both of bread and meat had been furnished in hundreds of thousands, causing millers, bakers, and butchers to be almost exclusively employed in the service of the army. All communication with the surrounding country was cut off; there was no market, and latterly no possibility of supplying the crowded town with provisions; beer could no longer be procured, bread seldom in sufficient quantities, often not at all, and at length high and low were alike reduced to the consumption of the still remaining stores of cheese and potatoes.

The unusual inclemency of the weather greatly added to the general discomfort; wild storms of

biting sleet succeeded the rain that had previously fallen in torrents; the cold increased, and the ground in the vicinity of the hastily thrown up intrenchments became a thick clammy mud, not only impeding progress but injuring uniforms and destroying shoes and boots in a manner that made a proclamation necessary commanding the attendance of all the shoemakers in Ulm to mend and make exclusively for the garrison.

It is difficult to imagine how the French, burthened with arms and provisions, managed to toil over roads rendered so nearly impassable by rain, and burrowed by the passage of artillery and bagage-waggons; but the chances of fatigue and exposure to the weather were not on any occasion taken into consideration by Napoleon when moving his troops, and therefore, in spite of all impediments, the presence of the main army soon became known in Ulm, when the inhabitants heard the booming of cannon in the direction of Elchingen and the rattle of musketry in their immediate vicinity.

With the succeeding military movements we have no concern, excepting in so far as they were evident or important to the inmates of the Waldering house, the situation of which, not far from the Danube gate, made them witnesses of the first

engagement which took place within sight of the walls of Ulm: this was when a column of French cavalry, halting at some distance on the Memmingen road, sent forward detachments to attack the Austrian pickets there stationed, and a skirmish commenced which increased to a conflict that lasted the whole afternoon.

The Director, Sigmund, and their friend d'Esterre mounted to the roof of the house to watch with similar hopes and feelings the progress of the engagement, while Doris and Hilda, peering through a small window in the loft, followed with anxious eyes the lines of moving infantry, the charges of cavalry, the march of reinforcements from the town, and the wreaths of smoke that preceded the report of musketry, without in the least understanding what was going on.

'It does not look so awful as I imagined,' observed Hilda, 'perhaps because the rain makes everything so indistinct.'

'Yet,' said Doris, 'it is horrible when one thinks that they are trying to kill each other, and that every shot we hear may cause death!'

At this moment Frank, mounted on Doris's horse, galloped at full speed across the bridge in the direction of the combatants.

'They have sent him with orders,' cried Doris,

clasping her hands, 'and he will be sure to get into danger.'

'And you,' said Hilda—'you have lent or given him Brian Boru?'

'Neither,' answered Doris, quickly; 'when his horse was wounded I proposed his taking him, but he assured me Brian was too light for a charger, did not stand fire, and I know not what else.'

'And now,' rejoined Hilda—'now he prefers him to *my* Selim; a freak not unlike his buying the carriage-horses, and paying—paying *me* for them, Doris!'

'I always feared he would be guilty of some such absurdities,' said Doris, in a low voice. 'Have patience, dear Hilda, and believe me all will go right at last.'

'Not if he see his power, Doris, and continues so well assured of my affection. He now thinks that I will submit humbly to any amount of arrogance on his part; but he is mistaken, and I hope before long to show him that I feel conscious of the independence he so rudely conferred on me.'

'But, Hilda, you have told me that you like this arrangement, and remain quite willingly with mama and me.'

'And so I do; I even find his "stipulations," as

he calls them, quite reasonable and judicious; but when they are not disputed, why make a display of his indifference or dislike to me? Why give Sigmund opportunities of pretending sympathy and offering consolation?'

'Why, indeed!' said Doris; 'he is perverse—ungenerous—and I shall tell him so the first opportunity that offers.'

'Not for the universe!' exclaimed Hilda, hastily; 'I will not have him ordered to treat me with politeness!'

'Perhaps you are right, Hilda; but at all events, when you judge him, take into consideration the state of agitation and anxiety in which he has lately been living. Believe me, he is not like himself just now!'

'To you, Doris, he is precisely what he ever was, and I only require him to be again the same to me. Am I unreasonable?'

'No, dear, no; and if you will only allow me to speak to him——'

'I will *not*, Doris; the time for the interference of friends is past, and having received his orders to adhere undeviatingly to these stipulations, I can only obey and console myself with——' She paused.

'With what?' asked Doris, anxiously.

'With the power to go where I please and to do what I like,' answered Hilda.

Neither of them spoke again, though they remained for some time longer side by side watching and waiting for the reappearance of Frank, who had apparently joined a body of cavalry that had soon after charged the French. They waited in vain; various detachments of troops left the town, but none returned, and at length, the storm beginning to drive sheets of waving sleet between them and the combatants, they turned shivering from the window and descended to the small sitting-room at the back of the house, which, with two or three other apartments of equally insignificant dimensions, had latterly been all that could be reserved for the private use of their family.

The sisters seated themselves at different windows, and looked into the garden with its Grecian temple, and the turbulent flooded river beyond, and were quite unconscious of the approach of evening until the sound of numerous and heavily-treading feet in the corridors announced the return of the soldiers billeted in the house to their quarters.

'Do you think,' asked Hilda, 'there is any use in making inquiries about him? The officers

here are so very polite that I don't at all mind asking them; besides, they know I have a right to—'

At this moment the door opened, and the object of their mutual anxiety stood before them. Bespattered with mud and blood, his clothes completely wet through, he advanced towards Doris with a step so slow and reluctant, so unlike himself, that she bent forward alarmed, and exclaimed as he approached, 'Frank,—you are wounded!'

Hilda sprang to her feet with an ejaculation of stifled terror.

'No, Doris, I am not wounded; I am not, I assure you!' he added, as she rose and, approaching him, pointed to the upper part of the sleeve of his coat, which hung dangling from his elbow.

'That was a lucky cut for me,' he said quietly; but it cost a French dragoon his life. You see the sleeve alone is injured.'

'I see that the lower part of it is saturated with blood,' she answered.

'Then,' he said, raising his arm for inspection, 'it is French blood that streamed down the blade and over the hilt of my sword.'

'Oh, Frank, how dreadful!'

'Yes, dear, very dreadful—after it is over; but when charging the enemy one is impelled onward by some irresistible impulse that gives a feeling of absolute exultation in crushing and destroying every opponent. There is something horribly exciting in these fierce struggles. It is soldiers' work, Doris, and will not bear quiet discussion. I came to speak of something else; to tell you that when carrying orders from the General I borrowed your horse Brian Boru—'

'I know it,' she answered; 'for I saw you riding over the bridge.'

'Can you forgive me for taking him, Doris, when I tell you that half-an-hour afterwards he was shot under me? His death was quick, for two balls in the flank and one through the body made him fall without a struggle.'

'And you, Frank, and you?'

'I managed soon after to pull a French lancer from his horse, got into his saddle, and returned to the attack.'

'And the lancer?' she asked, glancing suspiciously towards the blood-stained garments.

'He was a gallant fellow, and fought hard before he yielded.'

'Oh, then,' she said, with a sigh of relief, 'you did not kill *him*?'

Frank was silent for some moments, and then, in a low voice, answered, 'Doris—on such occasions, if a man does not take life—he loses it!'

She covered her face with her hands, as if to shut out the scene that presented itself, while Frank stood before her, his arms folded, his eyes bent on the ground, unconscious of the looks of intense admiration bestowed on him by his youthful bride, in whose idea he was at that moment the personification of all that was heroic, brave, and beautiful! What did she know of the horrible carnage in which he had been engaged? She saw him, mounted on her sister's prancing Hungarian steed, conquering everything that came within reach of his sword. She cared not how many had fallen,—she forgot they were French, and, as she usually asserted, her allies. To her there was but one slight, graceful rider sweeping the battle-field, with arm upraised, like a destroying angel! She could hardly contain her annoyance when her sister observed,

'You were merely the bearer of orders, Frank, and need not have been engaged if you had not wished it.'

'Very true, Doris; but—I can't resist temptation when it comes in my way, and besides, my regiment was there—'

'Your regiment is now in Vienna,' she interposed.

'Well, then, my old comrades were there; and when I saw my own troop in motion—'

'Frank, you never waited for that; you volunteered at once!'

'Yes, Doris, of course; and I would do it again!' he answered impetuously; 'and any fellow in my regiment would have volunteered on such an occasion.'

'Oh, Doris!' exclaimed Hilda; 'how can you take him to task in this manner?'

'You do not know what she means, Hilda,' said Frank, unable to conceal his annoyance at her interference, 'but I do; and she is right in the main, although a little hard upon me, as usual. Doris,' he added, after a pause, 'I am sorry, very sorry, about Brian, and any amount of reproaches on that score I shall listen to submissively.'

'I have none to make,' she answered; 'your own horse was unfit for service,—what could be more natural than to take mine?'

'Or mine?' interposed Hilda, making an effort to speak in her former unrestrained tone and manner. 'How often have you said that Selim might be a general's charger or the parade horse of a Turkish bashaw! Take him into your

service now, Frank, as the first step towards his promotion.'

'Hilda!' he answered, with a frigid gravity quite foreign to his character, and with great effort, assumed for the occasion, 'you ought to feel that, circumstanced as we are, I cannot possibly accept anything from *you*. I hoped I had been sufficiently explicit on this subject not very long since.'

Even in the gloomy twilight of the autumn evening Frank saw the painfully deep blush that spread over Hilda's face and neck while he spoke; and though the opportunity of exhibiting his complete renunciation of her in Doris's presence had been very acceptable to him, the words had no sooner passed his lips than he began to relent, and to wish the latter would openly undertake the part of mediating, and enable him with a good grace to consent to a cessation of hostilities calculated eventually to lead to a satisfactory peace.

But he had gone too far; his words had reminded Hilda of all her previous resolutions, and made her ashamed of having been induced, by admiration of his personal courage, to place herself in a position that had given him an opportunity of rebuking and repulsing her again. She turned

abruptly away, and left the room in silence more eloquent than words; and Doris, not at all disposed to mediate, stood up, exclaiming, 'Frank, you will break her heart; can you not see that she loves you ten times more than I ever did? Do you think that in her place I should have made so many attempts to conciliate you? I tell you, No! and one such repulse would have turned my affection into dislike, if not something stronger! I did not think you could be so ungracious and ungenerous; but it will at least serve the purpose of lowering you in Hilda's estimation—of making her see you as you are, instead of supposing you a demigod, as she does now!'

Before Frank had time to attempt an answer, Doris was gone; and, a good deal discomfited at the turn his affairs had taken, he sat down, placed his sword between his knees, his clasped hands upon the hilt, his chin upon his hands, and endeavoured, to the best of his ability, to form some plan 'to set all to rights again, and make it up with both girls.' Doris must be first considered. He did not attempt to dispute her superiority to Hilda—to himself—to every one; but he had a vague idea that she usurped a great deal of authority, and had been very hard upon

him of late:—It is true she was always reasonable, always in the right; but surely she must be well aware that his affection for her was the sole cause of the conduct she reprehended so severely. He believed he had been *brusque* to Hilda—ungentlemanlike, in fact; and after all, if Doris really wished him to forget her, and turn to her sister, would it not?—yes—it certainly would be better to obey her. There was no mistaking Doris's manner, and she was evidently angry, and not in the least gratified by his conduct.—Here Frank sighed deeply, and then came various vivid recollections of Hilda's blushing eager efforts to turn the 'winter of his discontent to glorious summer;' of unresisting submission to his stipulations, mingled, however, with some incipient fear of having tried her patience beyond endurance; but—had not Doris said that Hilda considered him a demigod?

The natural wish to see how Hilda's demigod looked just then, induced him to raise his eyes to the narrow glass between the windows, and the face reflected there, in spite of disordered hair and recent exposure to storm and sleet, was singularly handsome; it would also have been difficult to discover a fault in the well-formed figure, though the torn, stained, and bespattered uniform

and mud-incrusted jack-boots were not exactly calculated to enhance its comeliness; nevertheless, as he stood up, and placed his hand on the marble slab of the *console*, he was anything rather than satisfied with his appearance—made some useless efforts to improve it, as people foolishly will do when conscious they have previously been seen to disadvantage—hoped the sunless evening, and consequently sombre room, had prevented his cousins from minutely observing his dress, and then, murmuring something about even a demi-god requiring soap and water, he turned away thinking, for the first time in his life, more of Hilda than Doris.

CHAPTER XX.

'To eat horseflesh, or not to eat horseflesh?
That is the question.'

FRANK'S intention of being reconciled to Hilda was frustrated by public events of such importance that he only occasionally found time to think of, and regret, a procrastination that might eventually increase his difficulties. It had by degrees become evident that the twenty-five thousand Austrians in Ulm were surrounded by the whole army of Napoleon, and that the unfinished works beyond the walls could not be defended for any length of time. The French, with only a few days' provision in their knapsacks, spread over the surrounding country like a swarm of locusts, and soon caused a dearth that, reducing them to half-rations, and the unfortunate inhabitants in their neighbourhood to utter destitution, made the reduction of Ulm, and a movement elsewhere, a matter of absolute necessity. The only change in the weather was from snow and sleet to torrents

of rain; and under these circumstances the heights round the town were attacked, carried by storm, and the Austrians, overpowered by numbers, obliged to retreat within the walls.

This engagement lasted without intermission during a whole afternoon, the incessant sound of no longer distant cannon and musketry alarming the burghers so much that they began to fear a bombardment; and, when a few large balls actually strayed into the streets, they thought it time to put the cellars in order, that they might serve as places of refuge for their families.

The Austrians posted cannon on the walls, barricaded the gates, and partially destroyed the bridges. A French officer, with bandaged eyes, and preceded by a trumpeter, was admitted into the town, and taken to the Golden Wheel, where the generals were assembled, but his proposal to them to capitulate was at once rejected.

From that time forward all the inhabitants of Ulm were kept in a state of feverish anxiety; but the disquietude was greater in the Waldering family than elsewhere, for it was a house 'divided against itself'—the friends of one half being the foes of the other. Hilda, under the influence of her indignation against Frank, now sided com-

pletely with her uncle and Sigmund; while Doris and her mother, fully informed by Pallersberg of all that had occurred beyond the walls and at the Golden Wheel, only ventured to speak unreservedly to him or to Frank of their hopes and fears for the future.

'Do you think,' asked the Countess Waldering one morning, as Frank was about to leave the room where he had in vain lingered in the hope of seeing Hilda—'do you think that Marshal Mack really believes the Russians to be so near us as Dachau?'

'I don't know,' he answered; 'at all events, he tried to make the French officer think so when he proposed a truce of eight days, to which it is impossible for Napoleon to consent, as he is wholly unprovided with supplies for his army.'

'The provisions here will scarcely last so long,' she observed.

'Mack seemed to think we might subsist on our three thousand horses,' replied Frank.

'That proves, at all events,' said his aunt, 'that he is perfectly aware of the state of the town; the burghers, however, will not be well satisfied with his proclamation,—have you seen it?'

'No, but I know the purport.'

'You ought to read it,' she said, pushing the paper towards him.

And he read as follows:—

'In the name of his Majesty I render responsible, on their honour and their duty, all the generals and superior officers who shall mention the word "surrender," or who shall think of anything but the most obstinate defence—a defence which cannot be required for any considerable time, as in a very few days the advanced guards of an Imperial and a Russian army will appear before Ulm to relieve us. The army of the enemy is in the most deplorable situation, as well from want of provisions as the severity of the weather, and it is impossible that the blockade can be maintained beyond a few days.

'Our ditches are deep, our bastions strong; should provisions fail, we have more than three thousand horses, on which we can live for a considerable time. I myself will be the first to eat horseflesh——'

Frank paused, then placed the paper on the table.

'Well?' said his aunt, inquiringly—'well, what do you think?'

'I think he will not eat the horseflesh,' he answered.

There was something in the tone and manner in which these words were pronounced so like Frank's former self, that Doris—who had lately made him feel her displeasure by marked avoidance, and had been sitting at a work-table, apparently heedless of his presence—now looked up, fully expecting to see a gleam of his usual mirth playing on his countenance; but Frank was absently drawing lines on the painted floor with the point of his scabbard, and appeared profoundly dejected.

'So the chances,' continued his aunt, 'are, that we shall have to surrender?'

'Decidedly—unless the citizens of Ulm can be persuaded to allow the town to be reduced to ashes. The French are in possession of the heights, and a four-and-twenty hours' bombardment will complete the work of destruction.'

'What were the terms of capitulation offered?' she asked.

'The garrison to lay down their arms, and become prisoners of war, with the exception of the officers, who receive permission to return to Austria with arms, horses, and baggage. Should it

come to the worst,' added Frank, 'I shall cease to regret my appointment to another regiment, as General Laudon has promised to allow me to leave Ulm in whatever way I can as the bearer of despatches.'

'And,' asked his aunt, 'have you formed any plan of escape?'

'I think of floating down the Danube on one of the wood-rafts until I get beyond the French lines,' he answered; 'but as long as there is anything to be done here, I have no intention of leaving.'

'Have you anything very important to do, just now?'

'Yes—I must give orders about the interment, or I should rather say the burial, of our dead.'

'Pretty much the same thing, Frank, is it not?'

'No; for the poor fellows must be consigned to the water of the Danube.'

'For goodness' sake, Frank, take care that none are thrown into the river who are merely in a state of insensibility!—such things often happen.'

'I know it,' he answered gloomily, 'and will do my best to prevent any murderous mistakes. And now, Good-bye until evening.'

When Frank returned some hours later, he was informed that all the family had gone to a loft on the top of the house to look at the French watch-fires on the heights round the town. He followed them there, groping his way up the last narrow flight of steps in total darkness, and then stopping at the entrance, surprised to find not only those he sought, but also a number of the officers quartered in the house, standing in groups near the small windows that projected from the roof. The loft was very spacious, and but dimly lighted by a lamp placed on a huge mangle near the door, so that it required some time to discover that the beams and shingles of the roof were visible, and that baskets, boxes, trunks of various dimensions, and a curious collection of old furniture, were heaped along the low walls at each side.

Frank approached his aunt, who, with Doris and Pallersberg, were standing at the window nearest him, and they silently drew back to enable him to lean out and see the hundreds of fires that burned with lurid flames on the Michaelsberg and all the heights around.

'We may expect a bombardment to-morrow,' observed Pallersberg; 'and I have just been recommending your aunt and cousin to retreat to the cellar as soon as it commences.'

'Perhaps it would be expedient,' said Frank, turning round, 'though I do not think this house very dangerously situated. At all events, a good supply of water up here will be necessary, and we may chance to require those shrivelled leather buckets I have so often laughed at when I saw them dangling above our heads in the vaulted passages below stairs.'

'But,' observed his aunt, 'if we retreat to the cellar, who will attend to the house in case of fire?'

'The men quartered here, and who are not required elsewhere,' he answered; 'we have plenty of water, and plenty of hands to work. I suspect that will be our chief occupation to-morrow, unless Napoleon really wishes to destroy the town, which we must suppose he does not, as it belongs to an ally.'

'Then, I think, dear Doris,' began his aunt, turning to her daughter, 'if we can be of no use——'

'None whatever,' interposed Frank; 'and Hilda will of course go with you.'

'I cannot answer for her, Frank; she has become rather wilful lately.'

'Where is she?' he asked quietly.

'At one of the other windows, with her grand-

mother and uncle. Your unkindness, Frank, has made her turn altogether to them, and she has now so completely adopted their views of public affairs that, for the present, I think it better to avoid useless opposition.'

'The political opinions of a girl of seventeen are not of much importance,' said Frank; 'but why hers should be so different from yours and Doris's I cannot well understand.'

'You forget, Frank, that she is a Waldering—that she has been engaged to Sigmund for several years, and was to have been married to him this month. Would it not have been worse than folly had I tried to make her think differently from him and his family on a subject that is so continually discussed? A few kind words from you would have far outweighed all she has heard from either her uncle or Sigmund, and her personal enthusiasm for Napoleon could easily have been damped had you given yourself the slightest trouble to identify her interests with yours.'

Frank moved away in silence, walking towards that part of the loft where Hilda was standing. She and her relations were listening to encomiums and anecdotes of Napoleon, volubly poured forth by Louis d'Esterre, who ended by an instance of the marvellous munificence of his Emperor.

'Pshaw!' cried Frank, at length turning on his heel. 'It is very easy to give away other people's property and be generous, when it costs nothing!'

'*Notre cher François se fache, naturellement*,' said Louis, shrugging his shoulders, and continuing his discourse as if no interruption had taken place.

The Walderings saw Frank no more that evening, nor the next day until the afternoon, when the expected bombardment actually commenced. It soon became evident to all who had doubted the fact that the French, from their position on the Michaelsberg, could, and perhaps would, completely destroy the town if any delay in the capitulation should provoke them to do so. Cannon-balls were seen flying over the houses or heard hissing past the windows at first with more awe than alarm by the inhabitants; but when the bursting shells killed and wounded several persons and caused fire to break out in various places, the consternation became general. It is probable that this commencement of hostilities against the town was intended as a mere demonstration of power on the part of the enemy, for at the end of an hour the firing ceased as suddenly as it had begun, and hopes were for some time entertained that a capitulation was in prospect. No step towards it, however, having been taken, the cannonade commenced again, and

so much more effectually that in most houses a retreat to the cellars became necessary.

Many balls and bombs had passed over the Waldering House and fallen into the Danube; but, excepting the dowager countess and her companion Mina Pallersberg, no one could at first be persuaded to seek safety underground or believe in immediate danger in rooms where officers and men appeared to come and go precisely as usual. The Director wandered uneasily about the staircase and occasionally followed Sigmund and Louis d'Esterre to the loft, where, reconnoitring from the windows at both sides with their telescopes, they vainly endeavoured to make him understand what was happening or likely to happen. It was while they were there that a shell struck and soon after exploded on the shingled roof, causing it instantaneously to ignite, so that, had not soldiers been both in the house itself and in the immediate neighbourhood, and all well supplied with the requisites for extinguishing the flames, there was every probability that, instead of the roof, the whole building and all in its vicinity would have been burnt to the ground.

When the alarm and confusion caused by this incident had subsided, the Director insisted on his sister-in-law and her daughters retiring to the

cellars, where he accompanied them, explaining at some length the folly of people who could be of no use exposing themselves to the danger of mutilation or death. Having descended, candle in hand, to the vaults, they were not a little surprised to find themselves surrounded by a number of friends and acquaintances, who from more exposed parts of the town had sought refuge with them; and it happened that many of these, not having seen Hilda since her marriage, took the opportunity of formally congratulating her, and with a mixture of interest and curiosity commenced making inquiries concerning her plans for the future.

In order to escape explanations that were as embarrassing as unnecessary, and exclamations more irritating than sympathetic, Hilda at length took refuge on the cellar steps, and there remained alone and anxiously listening until she had convinced herself that for some reason or other the firing had ceased; then she ascended to the fresh air above ground, venturing first under the vaulted entrance to the house and afterwards to the gate, which, being partly open, enabled her to look into the street.

Detachments of soldiers were marching past, crowds of people moving to and fro, and strangers speaking to each other without the slightest reserve,

so that when Hilda joined some citizens standing in a group just outside the house no one appeared at all surprised, or hesitated for a moment to give her unasked all the information in their power.

'You see, Miss, they've stopped for the present, though no one knows anything of a capitulation as yet. A great many houses were burning half an hour ago, but the soldiers prevented the fire from spreading or doing much mischief. In the Hirsch and Frauen-street and about the Cathedral there was most danger, and there even the officers themselves worked at the pumps and buckets.'

'And the hospital?' asked Hilda.

'A black flag was hoisted there, but it's not easy to give such fireworks the right direction, and they say a shell burst in one of the large rooms and injured most of the wounded who were in it.'

Hilda suddenly remembered that just then was the hour in which she and Doris were usually in the habit of sending or going to the hospital with lint and linen. She thought it very probable that the fear of exposing themselves to danger might deter many families that day from fulfilling their promise of delivering regular supplies; how necessary, therefore, was it that an effort should be made by some of them! Would the quantity that she could carry be of sufficient importance to justify

the risk incurred? Her mother had often said that the fear of not doing much ought never to deter any one from endeavouring to do the little within their power, and that if every one thought and acted so, great things would be accomplished.

She returned into the house, and on the impulse of the moment ran up to the sitting-room, packed in a large bundle all the lint and linen prepared by her mother, her sister, and herself during the last twenty-four hours, hurried with it down the stairs and past the entrance to the cellar, where she greatly feared encountering some one who would have a right to expostulate with her; but, excepting some soldiers, no one was there, and with an indescribable feeling of buoyancy she carried her load through the crowded streets to the hospital, and had there the satisfaction of hearing that her effort had not been in vain, as the greatest embarrassment had prevailed in consequence of the usual supplies not having been sent.

Had Hilda had time to go into the room in which the shell had exploded a couple of hours previously, she would have been more alarmed on leaving the hospital to find that the bombardment had recommenced, and that these fiery messengers were again flying whistling through the air. Few

people excepting soldiers were now in the streets, and they were occupied preparing bivouac fires, as the closing day was unusually dark and chilly; Hilda walked on quickly, vaguely alarmed at the booming, hissing noise and the report of distant explosions, until she reached the Cathedral; there she paused and looked round before crossing the open unsheltered Place. Most of the soldiers stood under the gateways of the adjacent houses, and those occupied without looked up frequently and shouted to each other at intervals. The shells that during the day had been visible in the form of black balls of iron, now appeared like fiery meteors, with blazing tails most beautifully brilliant, first ascending to a certain height and then gradually descending to the spot where they were destined to execute their work of destruction.

When Hilda saw these dangerous missiles sweeping majestically over her head, she felt extremely unwilling to venture across the Münsterplatz: on the other hand, the necessity of reaching home before it became quite dark made it unavoidable that she should do so without delay. A shed had been erected in the middle of the Platz by some masons employed in repairing the Cathedral, in which bricks, lime, and sand were sheltered from the weather, and towards this shed, as if it were a

place of safety, Hilda walked as quickly as she could until the sound of loud calls of 'halt!' induced her to stop for a moment and look round: she saw the soldiers she had just passed all returning quickly to the houses, and only an officer, who to her great annoyance had closely followed her from the hospital, was rushing onwards, his cloak no longer concealing his face and person, but so flung backwards in order not to impede his progress that she instantly recognised Frank, and, greatly irritated at his having watched and frightened her unnecessarily, she resolved to run on to the next street and enter a shop where she and her family were well known.

'Hilda! Hilda!' he shouted in a voice that was hoarse from alarm, but which she supposed denoted angry command, and instantly resolving not to obey, she pursued her course until she perceived that a shell was actually descending in the direction of the shed towards which she was so madly hurrying: she saw it strike the earth, whirl round, burrow in the ground, which it seemed to excavate; but before it burst and the havoc commenced, and while she stood almost paralyzed by terror, she felt herself encircled by a strong arm and drawn with great violence to a considerable distance, where, though partly sheltered by a wall, Frank's

efforts could not altogether save her from the blows of splintered wood, pieces of brick, stones, and a shower of lime and sand.

Hilda remained perfectly quiet until she perceived that Frank relaxed his grasp of her arm; then she asked, with a great effort to conceal her terror, if the danger were over?

'For this time, yes!' he answered; 'and I now wish to Heaven you were safe at home!'

'So do I,' she said, shaking off the lime and sand that powdered her blue casimir dress; but you need not come with me,' she added, 'for I am not in the least afraid of being alone!'

'So I perceive,' said Frank, a good deal piqued, but greatly admiring her courage. 'It is, however, so late that I must insist on accompanying you to the Danube Gate; will you not take my arm?'

'No, thank you.'

They walked on for some time in silence, frequently passing the watchfires of the soldiers, and avoiding as much as possible the clouds of smoke, illumined by sparks and flashes of flame, that were wafted to and fro in the streets.

'The wind is rising,' observed Frank; 'I fear we shall have a stormy night, in every sense of the word.'

'Very likely,' she answered; 'and I should think these fires must be very dangerous with so much wind to blow the flames in all directions.'

'Perhaps so,' said Frank; 'but they are indispensable.'

'As to the bombardment,' she continued, 'that will not last long, or do much injury to the town.'

'Indeed!'

'Captain d'Esterre says they will only fire for an hour or so, at intervals, to convince your generals that further resistance is useless.'

Frank did not at all like hearing such painful truths from Hilda's lips, pronounced, too, with scarcely concealed exultation; and he therefore answered rather scoffingly, 'Of course Louis—I mean Captain d'Esterre—must be right; and I should be glad to hear any other words of wisdom that he may have uttered. Your memory, I know, is good.'

Her memory *was* good, and carried her back to the attic in the tower of Forsbeck, where Frank had derided her want of judgment, and upbraided her with the continual repetition of other peoples' opinions. The recollection made her blush until her cheeks tingled; she had spoken to him

merely to prove her self-possession and indifference to his presence, and he had convinced her that a word from him could chafe her beyond endurance. No reply occurred to her; and, even had it, she could not at the moment have articulated without bursting into tears of anger and mortification. To avoid this, and fearing she might otherwise betray her feelings, she yielded to the impulse that prompted flight, and, while Frank waited for an answer to a speech he half regretted having made, she sprang from his side, and was actually out of sight before he had recovered from his astonishment.

As a matter of course he instantly started in pursuit, and, forgetting for the moment all the anxiety that had preyed upon his mind for weeks, he rushed along the streets in a state of eager excitement, that increased whenever he occasionally caught a glimpse of his fugitive bride. He nearly overtook her when she was passing a large fire, as, in order not to attract attention, she there slackened her pace to a quiet walk, but he was obliged, for appearance' sake, to do nearly the same; nevertheless, he evidently gained ground, and by one great effort came up to her just before she reached a bivouac so near her home that the light from the fire was reflected in all the window-

panes, and the carved oak gate of the Waldering house was made distinctly visible.

Frank caught her arm, drew her towards him, and panted some incoherent assurances that he had not intended to give offence; she did not answer, or even listen to him, but, struggling with violence to release herself from his arms, pushed him from her with a gesture of abhorrence, and then ran on to the watchfire. He followed with long strides, accompanying her to the open gate, beside which he stood until she passed him and entered the house.

CHAPTER XXI.

MORE AT ODDS THAN EVER.

THIS state of affairs could not last much longer, and during the course of the ensuing day a convention was signed, by which the fortress of Ulm was to be given up, and the whole garrison to lay down its arms, if not relieved by a Russian or Austrian army before the end of another week. In the mean time a detachment of French troops were allowed to enter the town, put in possession of the Goecklinger and Frauen Gates, and quartered in the houses, already crowded with Austrians. The bridges were repaired with wood, the communication with the neighbourhood re-established, and, as a matter of course, all the French prisoners restored to liberty.

Louis d'Esterre made some very polite and appropriate speeches when taking leave, concluding with a fluent low-toned declaration of devotion to Doris, as she stood a little apart from the others at a window, disconsolately watching

some French chasseurs taking possession of the Grecian temple in the garden. She listened patiently, or rather apathetically, and, when he ceased speaking, quietly held out her hand, saying, '*Adieu Louis! Je ne puis pas badiner aujourd'hui.*'

Sigmund, who was within hearing, laughed unrestrainedly.

Louis d'Esterre shrugged his shoulders, and aughed with him. '*Hélas!* I am the enemy today,' he said, bowing over her hand; but I still will hope my lofe will be returned.'

At the foot of the stairs he met some chasseurs of his regiment, who greeted him enthusiastically, and, following them into the garden, he saw what he supposed the cause of Doris's displeasure. Not only was the temple filled with French soldiers, but a clump of rose-trees and flowering shrubs had been torn up by the roots, to make a clear space for a large fire, the fuel for which was being carried in armsfull from the adjacent wood-house.

'I cannot prevent that,' he murmured; 'nor this either,' he added, as some flower-pots containing valuable plants were pitched out of one of the windows of the temple; 'the men have no time for gardening just now!' A moment after he caught a

glimpse of Frank through the branches of the nearly leafless trees, as he was sitting on the low wall at the end of the garden, gazing thoughtfully into the river, and did not even move when Louis, advancing quickly towards him, called out, '*Holà François!*'

'My name is Frank,' was the answer.

'*Je comprends*—the tongue is unpalatable——'

'Very,' said Frank, without looking up, though he felt D'Esterre's hand on his shoulder, and did not for a moment doubt that the young Frenchman was looking at him kindly.

'I have got private notice, Frank; our *Empereur* will not—cannot wait until the 25th. If you have arrangement to make, do not delay.'

'He *must* wait!' cried Frank, vehemently. 'If I were in command, I would not yield an hour before the time stipulated!'

'But you are not in command, *mon cher*, and —and—for what good to prolong this state of things? Your marshal has agreed to surrender—to morrow.'

'Where? when?' cried Frank, starting up.

'At Elchingen, two—three hours ago.'

'Unconditionally?' asked Frank, impetuously.

'*N-o-n*—Ney is to remain here until the 25th.'

'Do you mean,' cried Frank, 'that all the other troops are placed at your disposition for ulterior operations?—at once?—without even a week's delay?'

'We have only gain five days,' said D'Esterre, half apologetically, 'and it is vain your expecting the Russians, for they have not indeed reached Bohemia; this, and the state of the neighbourhood, and want of provisions——'

'Reasons enough, I suppose,' said Frank, again seating himself on the wall.

'And you, *mon ami*, may rejoice——'

'I should like to know for what?' cried Frank with a grim smile.

'That you are no longer a Hohenlohe dragoon!'

'You mean that, not being included in the capitulation, I am spared to-morrow's humiliation, and may soon use my sword again. Yes; that *is* a consolation.'

'Ah, ha! *notre chère* Doris had reason when she said, "What is, is best!" and now, adieu!'

'Farewell!' said Frank, 'I hope that when we next meet it will be under pleasanter circumstances. Forgive my *brusquerie* during the last few weeks, D'Esterre; you know I have had both

public and private griefs enough for a whole life!'

'Adieu! O'More; we have no time to talk or think of either griefs or joys just now. Adieu!'

Frank turned towards the river, and seemed to watch some men constructing a large raft from the remains of several others that had been prepared to float down the Danube to Vienna some days previously. The wood had been required for temporary sheds and other purposes, but enough was left to make it still worth while to undertake the toilsome drift. Large trunks of carefully-barked trees were firmly lashed together, and furnished with rudders and a hut resembling a miniature log-house. Frank whistled shrilly, and a man in leather boots that partly covered his thighs looked round, and soon after, with the assistance of some others, brought the raft under the garden-wall.

'To-morrow afternoon,' said Frank, 'between twelve and two o'clock, I shall be ready. If you can manage to be here at that time, so much the better; if not, tell one of the Elchingen boatmen to take me up, and I can follow you down the river.'

The man touched his cap, and then brought

the raft back to its former moorings; while Frank, slowly rising, prepared to go into the town and obtain minute information concerning the capitulation.

The first person he met confirmed D'Esterre's statement. The capitulation had been actually signed at Elchingen, and the garrison were to march out of Ulm the next day and defile before Napoleon with all the honours of war previous to laying down their arms. Now, though there was not a youthful Austrian lieutenant who had not long been aware that, with five-and-twenty thousand men in an ill-fortified town and surrounded by Napoleon's whole army there was nothing else could be expected than a surrender at discretion, the universal grief and mortification was boundless. Not one undertook the defence of the unfortunate commander, and few, in that ill-starred hour, attempted even to vindicate the unavoidable and long-foreseen capitulation, which competent judges have since pronounced an inevitable consequence of a previous error—the having neglected to retreat into Tirol while it was still possible to do so.

The preparations for this parade were singularly tranquil, and the French quartered in the town, with that tact and good feeling which even their

bitterest enemies must acknowledge them to possess, avoided so effectually giving umbrage to their irritated or sullen foes that not the slightest quarrel or disorder took place.

The next day, when Pallersberg came to take leave of Frank, he found him walking up and down the deserted drawing-room in the Waldering house in a state of restless excitement. His aunt and Doris stood at a window looking into the street—not to watch the inhabitants of the town hurrying eagerly towards the Michaelsberg to be present at what was to them merely a grand military pageant, but in order to wave a farewell to the numerous officers and men who had so long been quartered in their house as they dejectedly assembled on the open space beneath.

'This is a bitter parting, Frank,' said Pallersberg; 'but if anything could reconcile me to your having left our regiment, it would be that you are spared what we must endure an hour hence!'

'I am not spared!' cried Frank, vehemently. 'I feel it here! I shall feel, and in imagination see it all as distinctly as if riding beside our poor fellows, not one of whom I am ever likely to see again!'

'Who can tell?' said Pallersberg, with forced

cheerfulness; 'imprisonment is not death! Come, Frank, leave Ulm as soon as you can, and do not let your thoughts rest upon an event which you can neither avert nor ameliorate. I see you are prepared for your journey, or voyage, whichever you choose to call it; nothing can be better adapted to a raft than those waterproof boots, and, indeed, your whole dress, which, I suppose, is sailor fashion. An hour sooner or later makes no difference. Step on your raft when I mount my horse, and let us wait until we meet in Vienna to talk over this day's disaster. Come——'

'I must take leave of my aunt—and Doris,' said Frank, hesitating.

'Do it quickly then; it is unlike yourself being so dilatory!'

'But I want—I wish—confound it, Pallersberg, you cannot expect me to go off without speaking a few words to Hilda!'

'Then make haste,' answered Pallersberg; 'for I saw her horse saddled as I came into the house, and she never keeps Selim waiting.'

'Her horse!' exclaimed Frank, changing colour. 'Her horse!—and saddled? In the name of all the fiends, where is she going to ride on such a day as this?'

Pallersberg, who perceived the consternation his

words had caused, hesitated, and then stammered something about a natural wish for exercise after such long confinement:—the Director would probably choose some quiet road.

'He will *not!*' cried Frank, violently; 'you know he won't. They are going to the Michaelsberg to witness this accursed parade—to feast their eyes on the anguish of our officers and the despair of our men! By Heaven, she shall not go—' and, breaking from Pallersberg's detaining hand, he rushed down the stairs and reached the vaulted passage below, while the horses were still stamping impatiently on the wood pavement.

Sigmund had just vaulted into his saddle, the Director was slowly mounting, and Hilda, drawing up the reins with one hand, bent over Selim's arched neck, and with the other arranged his long waving mane. She had just been given her whip, and was looking round to see if her uncle were ready, when Frank, pale with suppressed passion, rushed forward, laid his hand on her bridle, and, in a hoarse whisper, asked where she was going?

'To the Michaelsberg—to see Napoleon,' she answered fearlessly, her cheeks flushing and her eyes flashing.

'You shall not go—I insist on your dismounting instantly,' he cried, laying his hand impetuously on Selim's bridle.

The horse reared so frightfully that he threw his arm round her, fearing an accident.

'Keep off, Frank—take your hand from my bridle—I desire—I insist——'

He obeyed, but placed it heavily on the neck of the irritated animal, while he looked up and again indignantly commanded her to dismount.

'No, I will not; you have told me "to go where I please and do what I like," and this is the first use I make of my liberty.'

Though the quotation of his own words was by no means calculated to restore Frank's equanimity, it at least reminded him that he ought to remonstrate rather than command; but he enforced his few unintelligible words of angry expostulation by a strong grasp of the bridle, and Hilda, instead of listening to him, raised her whip, and a moment after it descended with a sharp whistling sound on Selim's neck and Frank's retaining hand. With one wild bound the horse carried her through the gateway, and was immediately heard galloping madly over the pavement of the street, while Frank, unprepared for the shock, was dashed

against the wall with great violence, and staggered along it until he came in contact with Pallersberg's shoulder, on which he leaned until the Director, riding up close to him, bent down and whispered, 'Don't leave Ulm, Frank, until after our return this evening; you had better make it up with Hilda, for though she may be self-willed, you have been far more so.'

Doris and her mother, who, standing at the foot of the staircase, had witnessed this scene in silent dismay, and Pallersberg who knew not whether to reproach or console his friend, now watched him as standing upright he fixed his eyes for a moment on his hand, across which a broad crimson welt was very conspicuous—the fingers closed convulsively, the clenched hand was raised. Frank struck his forehead violently, and then, without uttering a word, he sprang through the court into the garden, where, vaulting over the wall, he suddenly disappeared.

When Doris, her mother, and Pallersberg followed, the raft on which he had alighted was already in the middle of the Danube; but they saw him leaning on the low roof of the hut erected on it, his head buried on his outstretched arms, and apparently so indifferent to all around him

that the violent rolling and frequent immersion of the raft as it entered the current of the flooded river was totally unheeded by him.

'I am sorry I was the cause of this rude parting,' said Pallersberg, when taking leave; 'but my head was so full of other matters that I quite forgot how unlikely it was that Frank should know of the projected ride.'

Long after Pallersberg was gone, Doris and her mother stood leaning on the wall, gazing in the direction where the raft had disappeared; it was a continuation of Doris's thoughts when she observed that 'Hilda's determination to see Napoleon was most unfortunate.'

'It is very natural,' said her mother, 'and quite to be expected, after all she has lately heard of him. The day chosen for the gratification of her curiosity is certainly most unfortunate as far as Frank is concerned, and partly excuses his extreme violence.'

'Do you think,' asked Doris 'they can ever be reconciled after what has just occurred?'

'Yes, Doris; the actions of both were violent, but without lasting consequences, and the words few and not easily recalled. Such deeds make less impression than a very few bitter words.'

'True,' said Doris; 'but the bitter words have not been spared either.'

'Then we can only hope,' rejoined her mother, that when Frank recalls this parting he will scarcely wonder that Hilda did not obey commands so peremptorily uttered, and take into consideration that this is her first offence, while he has treated her since their marriage with the most unnecessary rudeness, affecting an aversion that it is quite impossible he can have felt.'

'I am afraid, dear mother, the motive of his conduct was a wish to prove the depth of his affection for me.'

'I can understand that to a certain extent,' answered her mother; 'but he need not have been so absolutely repulsive.'

'I think,' said Doris hesitatingly—'I fear that dear Hilda made too many efforts to conciliate. She let him see how much she loved him, and few men—I mean Frank—in short, mama, it is better never to let any man know the extent of one's regard; they only presume upon it and become tyrants.'

'Excellently argued, Doris, and that you will act so I have no doubt; but Hilda loves Frank——'

'Well, so did—so *do* I, mama.'

'Yes, my dear, calmly and rationally, as a cousin who has been a brother to you.'

'Oh, mama, a little more, or else I could not have promised to marry him even ten years hence!'

Her mother shook her head, 'As you *have* loved, you will, and may love him as long as he lives, Doris.'

'I should be glad to think so, mama—and Frank?'

'He must be given time, and Hilda will, I hope, have patience and forgive him.'

'I am sure she will,' said Doris, 'and far more easily than I could.'

'That's it, Doris; Hilda will submit to almost any amount of ill-treatment from him because she loves him—not rationally as you do, but passionately.'

At this moment they heard the sound of distant military music. It was the bands of the Austrian regiments marching out of Ulm to capitulate, and the gay strains sounded sad, as all music does when heard by the sorrowful.

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In the mean time Hilda, when joined by her uncle and Sigmund, rode quickly on, through the Frauen-gate, towards the Michaelsberg, where about thirty-six thousand French had taken their position—the cavalry between the town and the hill, and so facing the infantry that the space between was left clear for the capitulating garrison. The weather was as clear and fine as it had previously been inclement, and the greater number of the inhabitants of Ulm swarmed through the gate, and sought places where they were likely to have a complete view of a scene alike pompous and painful.

Hilda was the only lady on horseback in the field, and her black velvet habit and plumed hat caused some sensation—attracted also the attention of Louis d'Esterre, who immediately procured a place for her whence she could see Napoleon and all else likely to interest her. They were soon surrounded by a number of French officers, friends of D'Esterre's, and while Hilda laughed and talked with them, no one could have supposed that she was more depressed and hopelessly unhappy than she had ever been in her life. Her heart and thoughts were with Frank, and, from the moment it occurred to her that he might have left Ulm before she reached home, she forgot

everything in the strong desire to return to the town, to see him again, and at least part peaceably from him. Not for any consideration, however, would she have allowed her uncle, still less Sigmund, to suspect she entertained such thoughts; on the contrary, when Napoleon, followed by his numerous, brilliant, and somewhat theatrical-looking Staff, arrived from Elchingen, and was received with shouts and music, she pressed forward with quite as much apparent eagerness as the others; and as, immediately afterwards, the Austrian garrison marched through the Frauen Gate, she joined the crowd closing round the spot where the Emperor had halted, surrounded by a host of French and Austrian generals, all of whom were men of celebrity, whose names have since become historical.

Under the appearance of perfect serenity, Napoleon concealed the exultation he undoubtedly felt—he spoke politely to the Austrian generals of the chances of war—said that though so often victorious they must expect to be sometimes vanquished, and assured them of his earnest desire for peace! They bowed gravely; but as their troops defiled before the conqueror, many a hand raised in salute concealed eyes moist with

tears of bitter resentment, or glowing in suppressed rage!

For the French army, and especially for Napoleon, that military pageant was an intoxicating spectacle, and, undisturbed by a knowledge of the future, he enjoyed his triumph. He could not foresee that on the succeeding day his fleet would be completely destroyed by Nelson at Trafalgar; still less could the idea present itself that exactly eight years from the capitulation of Ulm—on the same day of the month—at the same hour—he and his army would be flying from Leipsic, after having met with a far greater disaster; while those very regiments now marching sullenly past him would, when reorganised and under the command of an Austrian general at that moment close beside him, eventually assist in dethroning him, and procuring a peace that he would have no further power to disturb.

CHAPTER XXII.

QUIESCENCE.

THE Austrians left Ulm, and a French garrison under General Labassée took their place. Marshal Ney also made the town his head-quarters for a week or ten days, during which time the ball-rooms of the hotels were again put into requisition, and a sort of mild moral compulsion used to induce the wives and daughters of the residents to appear at the 'Golden Stag,' 'Baum Stark,' 'The Wheel,' and elsewhere; that many were concealed in cellars, and still more sent off privately to visit distant relations, became subsequently known. Nevertheless, as a German woman can on an average dance twice as much as any other, the balls were gay enough, and before long all the young ladies were unanimous in declaring that when dancing quadrilles the French officers were inimitable, but in waltzing perfectly execrable.

Hilda, on her return from the Michaelsberg, had immediately walked into the garden, and straight to the wall where Frank had been seated three hours previously. Leaning over it, she glanced hastily across and down the river, raised her hand to shade her eyes from the glow of sunset, and looked intently again and again, as if unwilling to believe that the raft she sought was no longer there, then turned slowly away, and as she gathered up the folds of her habit, her eyes fell on her small gold-headed riding-whip, just then a so unpleasant remembrancer that, without a moment's hesitation, she jerked it into the Danube. How much sorrow and regret she flung away with the whip it would be hard to say; certain it is that she not only returned with perfect self-possession to the house, but even thought it necessary to prove her stoicism by stopping a moment in the yard to speak to Sigmund as he stood with folded arms inspecting the operation of hoof-washing.

Hilda asked no questions about Frank, and for a long time sedulously avoided naming him. She was at first unwilling to accompany her uncle and grandmother to the balls given by the French officers, but a few jesting remarks of Sigmund's

made her suppose it absolutely necessary that she should be seen in public, and that people should know she was perfectly happy.

In strong contrast to these festivities were the sufferings of the poorer inhabitants of the town, who, absolutely impoverished by the number of soldiers billeted in the houses and the increasing prices of the commonest necessaries of life, had latterly been at times in actual want of food; but it was not until after the capitulation had restored communication with the neighbourhood that they became aware of the total destruction of all the fields and gardens in the vicinity. It was necessary to make excursions to the places where the army had only remained a day or two, or where engagements had taken place, to form an idea of the state of wretchedness to which the people were reduced. That the generals disapproved of and endeavoured to prevent all excesses is beyond a doubt; but where an army of upwards of a hundred thousand men, only carrying provisions for a day or two with them, literally overspread a country, the consequences must be ruin to the inhabitants. In the province of Swabia, to which Ulm belonged, there were more than a hundred districts where the people were deprived of food, furniture, farming implements, cattle, and even

the necessary grain for seed. In the villages in which the troops had been stationed, houses had been pulled down to furnish fuel for the watch-fires, and the inmates in a few hours reduced to beggary; and few parts of the country had suffered more fatally than that in which Hilda's newly-acquired property was situated. After her first ride to Forsteck with her uncle, she seemed to have no thought beyond that of procuring money to alleviate the universal distress. He greatly approved of her subscribing a larger sum of money than most of the other patrician families, but he could not at all understand her determination to give the inhabitants of Forsteck all the wood they required to rebuild their houses, and he positively declined to assist her in selling out of the Funds at a heavy loss. At last he complained of her to her mother, and recommended a return to Westenried without delay.

'If she really cannot do anything more for these unfortunate people,' was his sister-in-law's reply, 'I shall, of course, propose our leaving Ulm.'

'You must not *allow* her to do anything more,' he said decidedly; 'it would be unpardonable if we permitted a girl of seventeen to squander her fortune in this manner, and people might say I

neglected to warn her because she had not married my son. It is scarcely an hour since she sold her horse to a French officer without consulting any one!'

'Sold Selim!' cried Doris; 'for what purpose?'

'To assist a miller at Forsteck whose wife and children came here yesterday and whined and whimpered for an hour in her room. I never heard of such extravagance!'

'This is not extravagance,' said his sister-in-law; 'it is charity, and the purest instance of generosity I have heard of for a long time. I do not imagine that Hilda could have made a greater sacrifice than selling Selim.'

'She will not be able to replace him for a good while,' said the Director, grimly; 'but, as I said before, she cannot do more for these people than she has done. It was her and your wish that the greater part of her funded property should be settled upon Frank—and so——'

Here Hilda entered the room followed by Mina, who seemed to be expostulating with her, for she said, when closing the door, 'But you know, Hilda, your grandmother will not go to the ball without you, and I am actually engaged for all the quadrilles.'

'I am sorry to interfere with your amusement, Mina, but I do not intend to go to any more balls. Mama and Doris were quite right to stay at home. It is very unfeeling of us to dance and feast while the poor people about us are weeping and starving.'

'Your staying at home will not do them any good,' persisted Mina.

'I know that; but in thinking of them I have lost all interest in balls, and all inclination to dance.'

'Oh, I understand what that really means,' cried Mina, laughing; 'but why cannot you dance quadrilles with the French, and keep the waltzes for our own people?'

'I don't choose to dance again, with either French or German,' said Hilda, decidedly.

'I suppose,' observed Mina, rather sarcastically, 'that Doris has been giving advice, and pointing out the impropriety of ——'

'No!' cried Hilda, interrupting her petulantly; 'I have learned at last to think and speak for myself.'

'With a vengeance!' exclaimed the Director, who was walking up and down the room, his hands, as usual, clasped behind his back.

'I wish I had done so sooner,' she continued,

with some excitement; 'for a little of what mama calls firmness of character would have saved me, and some others, much grief and endless regret.'

'I hope, however,' said her mother, 'that this newly-acquired firmness will not occasionally degenerate into obstinacy.'

'No, mama—never!'

'Your self-reliance makes me doubtful,' said her mother, smiling.

'And I am more than doubtful,' interposed the Director; 'for, after explaining the absolute necessity of new roofing this house, and of repairing the damage done at Forsteck, and new stocking the farm there, she still expects to have money for every one who asks for it.'

'Oh, no, uncle! I quite understand all you said to me this morning, and expect nothing from you now but papers covered with long rows of figures, accompanied by still longer lectures on economy.'

'And what,' said the Director testily, 'what is the use of my lecturing when I have no power to control? It is monstrous to think that a girl of your age can make ducks and drakes of such a property!'

'I don't intend to make ducks and drakes of it,' answered Hilda demurely; 'I was not even aware, until now, that I was so completely at liberty.'

'Your husband,' he replied with emphasis, 'is the only person to whom you are henceforward responsible in such matters.'

'Then,' said Hilda, 'as he declines all concern in my affairs, I must beg of you to continue your guardianship until I have learned to understand something of business myself. I will even promise not to be unreasonable and extravagant for a long time to come; and, if you and mama wish it, will put myself out of temptation by leaving Ulm to-morrow, and going at once to Westenried.'

'Westenried!' exclaimed Mina, 'you will die of *ennui* there, after the gaiety we have enjoyed here.'

'Gaiety! enjoyment!' repeated Hilda; 'God, in His mercy, defend me from such gaiety for the rest of my life!'

'And mine,' said Doris, in a low voice.

'We shall not die of *ennui*,' observed their mother; on the contrary, I am convinced the tranquillity of Westenried will be most welcome to us all after the harrowing scenes we have witnessed here. Let us return there as soon as possible.'

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The journey home (which now could be made in six hours) required then three whole days. The Director, his mother, and Mina, proceeded no further than Munich; but Sigmund chose to go on to Westenried with the others, and it was late on the evening of the third day as the heavily-packed carriages rolled slowly into the court. The hall-door and staircase were decorated with wreaths of fir-tree branches, enlivened by the last asters of the season placed at intervals, and the word 'WELCOME' was conspicuous over the entrance to their apartments on the second floor. Old Mr. Pallersberg followed them up the stairs, while his wife remained with Sigmund on the first floor, giving his servant various directions and a good deal of unnecessary assistance.

'If you had only let me know that you were also coming, Count Sigmund,' she said, with ill-concealed annoyance, 'you would have found your rooms heated, and everything in order; but I shall put all to rights when you go upstairs to supper.'

'I shall not go upstairs to supper,' said Sigmund.

'And why not?'

'Because I am not invited.'

Madame Pallersberg looked at him inquiringly.

'Have you forgotten the changes that have taken place?' he asked, 'and that my position in my aunt's family is quite different from what it was?'

'Well, no; but she is your aunt still, and Mina wrote us that everything had been amicably arranged as far as you are concerned.'

'Oh, very amicably,' said Sigmund; 'but I can neither go to supper to-night, nor to dinner to-morrow, without an invitation; so you must keep house for me.'

'Beginning,' she said, 'to-morrow, I hope; for, after having lived so long on potatoes and cheese, you really must have some of the magnificent turkey I have provided for the supper upstairs. Mina wrote, however, that, with all the starvation at Ulm, it was an uncommonly gay and sociable place.'

'I believe she amused herself very well,' said Sigmund; 'the Austrian and French officers paid her a good deal of attention, and Mina likes that sort of thing.'

'Well, I suppose it's natural at her age,' said

Madame Pallersberg; 'but I would rather hear of one proposal of marriage than of a score of admirers. I cannot help fearing, Count Sigmund, that our Mina has been a little spoiled by the grand people she meets at your grandmother's; they have given her quite a hankering after fine names and rank. I spoke to her several times when she was last here, and told her that counts and barons were often very poor, and would not, or could not, marry her, as she had no fortune; while those who were rich would never condescend to think of her at all.'

'And what did she say in answer?' asked Sigmund.

'Not much: that generally speaking I was right, but that there were exceptions to all rules. There is no doubt, however, that she was very much out of spirits when here, and I latterly began to fear—' here she paused, and looked hard at him—'in fact, I strongly suspected she was suffering from an ill-placed, hopeless attachment.'

'Bless my soul!' cried Sigmund; 'you don't mean to insinuate that she, too, was captivated by the irresistible "cousin Frank?" You know, of course, that both Doris and Hilda were over head and ears in love with him?'

'No, Count Sigmund; I thought of a more natural and probable attachment.'

'You mean Emmeran? I have never observed anything of the kind; but it is hard to judge where such great intimacy exists.'

'If it be Count Emmeran,' she said gravely, I hope he will act honourably, and not raise hopes that must be disappointed, nor make promises that he cannot perform.'

Just then her husband appeared at the door, and announced himself as the bearer of an invitation to supper, not only to Sigmund, but also to his wife.

'Well, I *am* glad you are to have a slice of that turkey,' she said, leading the way upstairs; 'how you will relish it after the potatoes and cheese of Ulm!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANOTHER HOLY-EVE.

THE tranquillity of Westenried proved acceptable to all its inmates; and, after receiving from Pallersberg an account of the battle of Austerlitz, and assurances of Frank's safety, the succeeding peace of Presburg and its consequences furnished deeply interesting and constant subject of conversation during the winter. Bavaria became a kingdom on the 1st of January, 1806; and in the following August the Emperor Franz II., resigning the crown of the Holy Empire, with the declaration that, under existing circumstances, he could no longer consider himself Emperor of Germany, assumed, as Franz I., the title of Emperor of Austria, and the German Empire thenceforward belonged to history.

During the ensuing autumn the Director, his mother, and Mina Pallersberg, returned to Westenried; and when Emmeran joined them for a short time in October, they were (Frank's absence ex-

cepted) precisely the same party that had been there together two years previously. The same, yet not the same, for much was changed in that short time. Sigmund, who had only been absent for a few weeks in winter, had managed by degrees to regain his former intimacy in his aunt's family. Hilda openly avowed that she liked him infinitely better as cousin than as *fiancé;* and Doris, whose mind was just then completely engrossed by Dr. Gall's newly-discovered system of phrenology, either seemed, or really was, unconscious of the fact that he had resumed his previous position by tacitly substituting her for Hilda.

The arrival of his grandmother and her companion Mina caused Sigmund great annoyance, as he well knew how difficult it would be to conceal his present hopes and plans concerning Doris from either of them. From his grandmother he only apprehended being forced into premature explanations; but to Mina he had some years previously made a promise of marriage, should any chance ever release him from his engagement to Hilda. In Ulm he had assured her repeatedly of the impossibility of ever obtaining his father's consent, and would now unhesitatingly have told her the truth, that he no longer entertained a thought of fulfilling a promise so imprudently

made, had he not feared an explanation and appeal on her part to Doris. This induced him to continue to temporise. He avoided Doris, spent most of his time shooting and fishing; and so it happened that Hilda and her sister resumed their walks, and rows on the lake together, and unconsciously recommenced the confidential intercourse that had ceased by mutual consent on the day that Frank had left Ulm. *His* name, however, had never been mentioned until one afternoon towards the end of October, when, as they walked together in the garden, Doris observed,—

'This is the anniversary of your wedding-day, Hilda; I wish you many happy returns of it.'

'Thank you, dear,' she replied; 'I am, at all events, very much happier than this time last year.'

'I suppose,' continued Doris, 'that hearing of Frank's promotion gave you great pleasure?'

'Of course it did.'

'And a—Hilda—mama and I were considering this morning if it would not on this occasion be advisable for you to write a few lines of congratulation, by way of commencing some sort of communication with him, and just on this day——'

'No, Doris; neither this day nor any other. I

should despise myself if I ever again made the slightest advance to him; and I am quite sure you would not do anything of the kind were you in my place.'

'I don't know that,' said Doris; 'it makes an immense difference when one is actually married, and I do believe I should consider it a duty to make every effort to gain his heart after having accepted his hand.'

'Very likely you are right, Doris—you generally are—but I can bear no more repulses, and the next overture must come from him.'

'But,' suggested Doris, 'it may be long before you meet if you trust to chance, or let things take their course.'

'How long?' asked Hilda.

Doris was silent.

'You think,' said Hilda, 'that he may wait until the end of the time stipulated—the whole ten years?'

'N—o,' answered Doris, reluctantly; 'I cannot think he will have resolution to absent himself so long from us—he is too warm-hearted.'

'It is a pity, Doris, you had not studied Dr. Gall's system of phrenology before Frank left us; we could then have balanced his organ of firmness against his warm heart.'

Doris stopped for a moment, and looked keenly at her sister. That Hilda had gradually regained her former gaiety had long become evident, but that she could actually speak of Frank with smiling lips and a cheerful voice was, nevertheless, rather surprising.

'I believe your organ of firmness is very considerable?' said Doris.

'I thought,' rejoined Hilda archly, 'that people generally called firmness, when possessed by women—obstinacy? But you need not explain. Call it what you please, Doris, I have resolved not to accept the pity so universally offered me, and to banish Frank altogether from my thoughts.'

'But can you do so, Hilda?'

'Why not? I have nothing to remind me of him, and I still hope we may be able to prevent my mother from commencing a correspondence that I am convinced will only make matters worse. He does not want to hear of or from us, for Mina told me it was out of consideration for me that her brother's last letter was not read aloud, because in it he mentioned that Frank had led the gayest possible life among the most fashionable people in Vienna during the Carnival —making himself, as usual, remarkable by all

sorts of wild exploits, and unreservedly paying attention to every handsome woman he met. He is now on a visit somewhere in Hungary, where, by all accounts——'

'Mina need not have told you all this,' said Doris, hastily.

'I am very much obliged to her,' rejoined Hilda; 'she has made my task much easier. I can scarcely imagine a better remedy for my foolish infatuation about Frank than the certainty of his not being worthy of the admiration and ardent affection I felt for him.'

'But, after all,' said Doris, quietly, 'what has he done? The war is over for the present in Austria—why should not people begin to enjoy themselves again? Frank learns Polish and Hungarian dances—is liked as a partner, and invited to balls—he rides well, becomes intimate with his comrades, and goes to spend a few weeks with some of them in some out-of-the-way place where a number of gay people are assembled —where is the harm in all this?'

'None—to you, Doris, or your rational affection; but I—I feel jealous—horribly jealous of all these handsome women who have made him so utterly forget me.'

'That was what I feared,' said Doris; 'and,

therefore, I avoided mentioning this letter, though I can assure you it was written lightly and kindly, and without any intention of provoking either anger or jealousy. Mina forgot to tell you that no *one* person is especially mentioned, and you well know that Frank is both naturally and habitually attentive to all women. If this be your only reason for not writing to him——'

'No, Doris,' she answered, resuming suddenly her former cheerful manner; 'this is only one of my many and good reasons for not writing; but, were I to do so, it would be impossible to resist the temptation to tell him that Sigmund had been appointed to his place, and was now playing the part of friendly, rational lover to you, with the prospect of a marriage ten years hence!'

'A marriage with Mina Pallersberg, perhaps,' said Doris; 'she told me, soon after her arrival here, that she and Sigmund had been definitively engaged from the day of your marriage.'

'From the day of my marriage?' repeated Hilda, slowly.

'Yes, dear; it seems he has been for years conditionally engaged to her.'

'Impossible!' cried Hilda—'quite impossible!'

'It is certainly not creditable to either,' continued Doris; 'but I believe Mina spoke truth

when she told me he had promised she should be his wife if any chance ever released him from his engagement to you.'

'Oh, Doris, this is quite dreadful! I did not imagine that any one could be so deliberately wicked! Do you know that, during the whole time of my engagement to Sigmund, Mina endeavoured to prejudice me against him—that she contrived to make me jealous of you—that, with motives which I now understand, she encouraged my admiration for Frank, and on innumerable occasions made arrangements and remarks tending to promote disunion among us all; but so acting and speaking, that she was the very last person likely to be implicated should quarrels ensue. I can even recollect that she was the proposer and encourager of that fatal ride to Forsteck——'

'We must be just,' said Doris, 'and remember that Mina could not possibly have foreseen such consequences.'

'She foresaw a violent dispute with Sigmund, at all events,' replied Hilda; 'and that was sufficient, as I had previously given him cause enough for jealousy, and tried his patience so often, at her instigation, that a few angry words might even then separate us. All her plans have succeeded,

and she now only informs you of this engagement to prevent you from accepting Sigmund, whose wishes and intentions we all know, though they seem to have escaped your observation.'

'Not exactly,' said Doris; 'but I have tried to avoid so disagreeable an explanation.'

'You mean to reject him?'

'Undoubtedly.'

'At all events,' said Hilda, with heightened colour, 'that is an easier task than to bear rejection, of which I have had such bitter experience.'

At this moment they passed behind an edifice constructed of large rough stones, decorated inside with shells, and denominated 'The Grotto,' and heard Sigmund, in a loud and impatient voice, exclaim,—

'There is no use in talking any more about it, Mina; all stratagems are fair in love or war, you know, and I may as well end the discussion by confessing that I never for a moment entertained a serious thought of fulfilling so absurd and imprudent a promise. Let me again advise you to accept the proposal of the Forester of Waldering, or, indeed, any one your parents may recommend——'

Doris and Hilda walked quickly on.

'Do you think she is really and deeply attached

to him?' asked Hilda; 'for,' she added with a sigh, 'in that case I could feel for her, and think her conduct more pardonable. One is so selfish—so very selfish—when under the influence of such feelings.'

'I cannot imagine any one loving Sigmund for himself,' answered Doris.

'If ambition influenced her,' said Hilda, 'she is justly punished, and we need not waste any commiseration on her.'

A few days later the Director sent to invite Doris, Hilda, and their mother to dine with him in his apartments, and while they were sending a message of acceptance Sigmund and Emmeran entered the room and laughingly informed them that, as it was their father's birthday, they might prepare speeches and expect champagne!'

'And I only thought of Holy-Eve,' said Doris.

'Is it indeed Holy-Eve?' cried Emmeran; then I shall certainly burn nuts, as I did two years ago: do you remember?'

'Yes,' answered Doris, laughing; 'but I believe you were rather unfortunate, for the nut representing your lady-love always hopped off.'

'While I,' said Emmeran, 'or rather my nut-representative, burned and glowed to a cinder, and will do so still!'

'For the same mysterious personage?' asked Doris.

'The same—then, now, and for ever!'

'And you will not tell us her name?'

'No; but I should now like to look into your magic-glass at midnight, if you will go again to the island.'

'Not for any consideration,' she answered gravely; 'for though I do not at all believe that Hilda saw an apparition in the vaults, it is certainly remarkable not only that chance obliged her to give Frank the ring we found there, but also that *he* is now in the regiment in which her father served in his youth, and wears the very hussar uniform that she asserted she saw on the shadow in the glass!'

'That *is* very curious,' said Emmeran; 'I must ask Hilda more about it.'

And he walked into the next room, while Doris, looking out of the window, fixed her eyes on the island and seemed to forget that Sigmund was beside her until he asked 'if she had ever looked in a magic-glass?'

'I have played all these Holy-Eve tricks, as they are called, in Ireland,' she answered; 'but either I am not superstitious or not imaginative,—I never saw or heard anything. Even lead when

I melted it, and eggs when I broke them into glasses of water, failed to take a form that would admit of a surmise; it always seemed as if the fairies were resolved to strengthen me in my resolution to remain unmarried, and, a young lady learned in such matters having informed me that the best security of all against marriage was to read the form of solemnization as it is printed in our Prayer-book, beginning at the words "Dearly beloved," and ending with "amazement," not missing a syllable or looking up, and commencing exactly as the clock struck twelve on Holy-Eve, I did so, and she gave me the satisfactory assurance that the ceremony would never be performed for me. I thought of this and of Frank just now, and find that events have confirmed her words in a manner that, to say the least, is very singular.'

'Singular it would indeed be, if you remained much longer unmarried,' said Sigmund; 'and I feel bound as loyal knight to assist in breaking the spell cast on you by this midnight sorcery. An English clergyman might easily be found, Doris, to read this service for you—and me——'. He paused, and then added, 'May I hope it will be so?'

'No.'

'And why?'

'I do not like you well enough.'

'Have you any other reason?'

'Perhaps I have; but that is sufficient.'

'It is not!' he cried, catching her hand to detain her. 'You must tell me if Mina Pallersberg has been speaking to you?'

'*You* spoke very loudly to her in the garden yesterday,' answered Doris, 'and when I passed the grotto with Hilda I heard you say you had never entertained a thought of fulfilling your absurd and imprudent promise to her.'

'And what was that promise?' he asked quickly; 'or rather, how could you have understood what I meant if she had not previously explained?'

Doris attempted no answer.

'Then it is as I suspected,' he said, vainly endeavouring to conceal his agitation; 'and now you must hear my explanation.'

'I should rather not,' said Doris; 'you cannot deny having made the promise.'

'I made it conditionally when there was not the slightest chance of what has since occurred taking place, and long before I ever saw you. Listen to me, Doris: Mina's intrigues to disengage me from Hilda have been diabolical. I saw through but

permitted them, because I wished to have you free and to be at liberty myself.'

'Then you were her accomplice,' said Doris, 'and now, having confessed that you indirectly assisted in separating me from Frank, how can you expect me to give you his place in my regard?'

'*His* place!' exclaimed Sigmund; 'I do not want it, I do not wish for it! Your regard for him was mere habit, like mine for Hilda—a brotherly, cousinly, affectionate, most laudable sort of regard; but I will venture to aver that as yet you have not an idea of love as I understand it.'

'Perhaps not,' she answered. 'You loved Mina well enough to give her what you call a conditional promise of marriage; on Hilda you bestowed an habitual affection that served as foundation for a solemn betrothal, and for me you profess a regard that stimulated you to aid in destroying my best chance of domestic happiness in this world! Let us not quarrel, Sigmund: I hope before long to be able to forgive both you and Mina as thoroughly as Hilda does; but more than that I cannot promise.'

Just then the others entered the room, and it was agreed that at this birth-day dinner they would

all appear in full-dress; even Emmeran was enjoined to put on his uniform, and desired to request Madame Pallersberg to wear her new cap with the scarlet topknot.

'She has sent us one of her famous chocolate tarts,' he said, laughing, 'and on it there are a couple of clumsy sugar-hearts as decoration. I puzzled long before I discovered that they might perhaps be intended to represent her and her husband's hearts as "Friendship's offering" to our Director. My father was wonderfully pleased at the discovery, and walked up and down the room rubbing his hands and laughing heartily.'

When they assembled at dinner-time, Sigmund forced himself to appear as cheerful as the rest of the party, and made his father the longest and most elaborate of congratulations on the completion of his three score of years.

The dinner lasted long, and a good deal of champagne had been consumed before the Director found himself sufficiently exhilarated to make an oration that had evidently been prepared, and which some of those present, as was afterwards ascertained, were awaiting in nervous anxiety. He commenced by handing Sigmund a written document, containing a formal resignation of Westenried and all its appurtenances to him; then

declared his intention of bestowing personally on Emmeran the sum of money that he was hereafter to have received as inheritance, and, while his two sons still gazed at him in speechless astonishment, he added that, 'having provided for them, he felt at liberty to take a step that would materially conduce to the happiness of the rest of his life—he had found an amiable and accomplished companion——.' Here he rose, and approaching Mina, took her hand, bowed over it, and then presented her to his family as his future wife!

The reader may imagine the effect of these words on all present; even the Pallersbergs, though not surprised, seemed fully to share the universal embarrassment, mixed with much anxiety. Mina changed colour rapidly and glanced furtively towards Sigmund, on whom, in fact, all eyes were fixed, and he seemed to think it incumbent on him to answer, for, with features working convulsively and after several vain attempts to articulate, he at length stammered: 'Has this—this very unexpected—arrangement—been made to-day?'

'Oh, no!' answered his father, cheerfully; 'that document in your hand will prove that the resolution has been long formed.'

'And *her* consent?' asked Sigmund, with a forced smile.

'Was given, I may say willingly given, before we left Munich.'

Sigmund started from his seat, and strode towards Mina. 'Your consent was willingly given?' he said in a voice of suppressed rage.

Mina did not answer; she turned her head away, and clung to the Director's arm.

'Have you, continued Sigmund, sternly—'have you for once in your life told the truth—the whole truth? And does my father know that even yesterday you——?'

Mina's agitation became so great that the Director turned angrily towards his son, and asked what he meant by openly insulting a person who would soon be a member of their family?'

'If,' said Sigmund, with a sneer, 'if you are not completely blinded by your passion for this young lady, I think a few minutes' conversation with me will make the future relationship very problematical.'

'Do not believe what he says,' cried Mina, bursting into tears. 'He does not wish you to marry again, and intends to traduce me!'

'Sigmund,' said the Director, earnestly and quietly, 'I did not at all anticipate this violent opposition to my marriage on your part, and must

remind you that you have less right than any one to interfere on this occasion. I have put you in complete possession of your uncle's property, and only reserved my own small fortune, my profession, and subsequent pension for myself. In no way, therefore, can my marriage concern you; and I not only decline any advice you may intend to offer, but insist on your making an apology to Mina for the very improper expressions you have just used concerning her.'

'I will not apologise,' said Sigmund, haughtily, or ever see or speak to her, should she succeed in persuading you to make her your wife!'

'Be it so, Sigmund; you are fortunately not necessary to our happiness,' answered the Director, seating himself again at the table.

An angry retort hovered on Sigmund's lips; but, perfectly aware that by self-possession alone he could make an impression on his father, he bent down towards him, and, with the assurance that he had not meant to offend *him*, formally requested an hour's conversation the next morning, and hoped to be excused if he absented himself for the remainder of the evening.

'More than excused,' replied the Director, without looking round. 'I am well aware that sons

seldom approve of their fathers' marrying again, but if ever a man had a right to do so, I may say I have!'

Sigmund left the room, and great efforts were made by all to restore the previous cheerfulness, but in vain; every one was more or less embarrassed, and the party broke up in consequence at an early hour, the Director assuring Mina and her parents, as he accompanied them down the stairs, that they should never again be subjected to such rudeness, and that Sigmund's conduct would only serve to hasten the marriage he had opposed with such unexpected violence.

When Mina soon after entered her own room, she found on the table a carefully sealed note, containing but the one line:—

'Meet me at the willow-tree, in the orchard, at midnight;'

And, with eyes riveted on the order she dared not disobey, she sat deliberating anxiously until the short day drew to a close, and the words of the dreaded appointment became illegible.

She heard her father's step on the drawbridge, and looked after him as he walked towards the inn where he usually spent a couple of hours every evening, and then she joined her mother, and listened to her indignant remarks about Sig-

mund, and praises of the Director, while they both worked at the *trousseau* that had been in secret progress for many weeks, Madame Pallersberg being herself so loquacious that her daughter's silence was quite unobserved. At length they separated for the night, and soon after Mr. Pallersberg returned home. Mina heard him carefully lock the castle gate, ascend the stairs, and enter his room, the door of which she passed two hours later on tiptoe, a shawl drawn tightly over her shivering figure, and her head covered with a black lace scarf.

The night was dark, notwithstanding the myriads of stars in the cloudless sky; but when her eyes had become accustomed to the obscurity, she easily found her way across the court, and into the garden and orchard.

The willow-tree was not far from the boat-house, close to the lake, and with boughs extending far over the surface of the water, into which the pendant branches dipped unceasingly—just then with some violence, as they were blown to and fro by the autumn wind. The lake was dark and ruffled, and the outline of Sigmund's figure indistinct, even when Mina stood almost close beside him.

'Sigmund, be merciful,' she said, in a low voice

of entreaty, 'and do not deprive me of my last chance of—of——'

'Of becoming Countess Waldering,' he said, interrupting her,—'father or son, it is all the same to you! But no; I had almost forgotten—you preferred me yesterday—perhaps to-day—or even now?'

'Oh, Sigmund! if you had ever loved me, or any one, you could not be so cruel!'

'It is precisely because I love that I have resolved to punish you for interfering with my best chance of happiness. You told Doris of my promise to you. In return I shall tell my father what you have said and written to me. He shall know all—all—to-morrow, and I leave you to judge if he will afterwards think it necessary to fulfil any promises he may have made you!'

'Spare me, Sigmund! Spare me! I see that without your consent I cannot become your father's wife, but for Heaven's sake give me back my letters. I believed you implicitly when you assured me you had destroyed them; and even now cannot think it possible that you will use such means to betray me! Be satisfied with having deprived me of an establishment such as will never again be offered me.'

'Then you resign all claims on my father?'

'I cannot help myself.'

'But in these same letters,' continued Sigmund, 'you have mentioned my grandmother in a manner that will cause you to forfeit her friendship and protection in future.'

'Sigmund, what I wrote was but a continuation of my conversations with you.'

'My words, fortunately, are not written,' he observed cynically.

'Must I then return to my parents?' she asked. 'Do you condemn me to live over the gateway of the castle for the rest of my life?'

'By no means,' he answered. 'I consider you so dangerous, that I should make it a point with your father that you were never to enter his apartments here.'

'Are you in earnest, Sigmund?'

'More so than I ever was in my life when speaking to you,' he answered.

'And what is to become of me? Do you know that you are making me homeless?'

'You have made me the same,' he cried fiercely. 'By your means Westenried has become odious to me on the very day it was put in my possession. Your infernal machinations first separated me from Hilda, and then made Doris dislike me. I have now my revenge, and I enjoy it.'

'You will drive me to despair!' she said, in a low, wailing voice. 'I wish I were dead, and in my grave. Have mercy!' she added, clinging to him, though he tried to push her from him—'have mercy, as you hope for mercy; for, if you do not relent, you will force me to end my life in the lake!'

'The old story!' he answered, laughing ironically. 'How often have you threatened to take this plunge, and haunt me for the rest of my life?' I do hope, however, you have no fancy of the kind just now, as I should be under the necessity of saving you from drowning, and the water must be confoundedly cold on such a night as this!'

The taunt gave Mina courage; she flung her shawl from her shoulders, and, with a loud wild cry, sprang into the lake.

The moment Sigmund recovered from his astonishment he followed her; but the night was so dark that he could not see her when she rose to the surface, and it was in vain that he afterwards swam about, panting her name and grasping everything he found floating on the water.

It was long—very long—before he could believe that the unfortunate girl once loved, and latterly so intensely hated, had actually been driven by him to commit suicide. As he again

stood under the willow-tree, breathless, and with clothes from which the water poured in streams, he for a moment—for one horrible moment—felt himself a murderer; the next—such is the perversion of the human heart—he found excuses for himself, and soon after the blame rested chiefly on his victim. By what mode of reasoning he came to this conclusion is of no importance to us; it was probably not very satisfactory, as he stamped repeatedly on the ground, and ended by muttering that 'he was not the first man who had broken a promise of marriage, nor was he likely to be the last. He had not believed her threat of drowning herself; and if the night had not been so dark, and the lake like a pool of ink, he could easily have saved her life. He had done his best, at all events, and there was no use in standing there any longer.'

And then he turned away, fully resolved never to betray his share in this catastrophe.

Nor did he; but enough blame rested on him to cause a conflict with his father on the ensuing day that served effectually to estrange them for ever.

END OF VOL. I.

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